The Isolation of Germany

by
First Embassy Secretary

BARON
HERMANN V. ECKARDSTEIN

Volume III
of

Memoirs and Political Memorabilia

PUBLISHING HOUSE PAUL LIST LEIPZIG
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Translated by Ian McGillivray
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Preface

In the first and second volumes of my political memoirs, I explained how Prince Bismarck made repeated attempts in the years from 1875 to 1887 to gain access to England in the form of a German-English defensive alliance, as he had become convinced that it would only be possible for Germany to pursue world and colonial policy on a large scale in the long term without jeopardizing the security and existence of the Reich if it was in alliance and with the backing of England. England, however, was not yet ready for an alliance and continued to adhere to its traditional policy of a free hand.

But what seemed unattainable during Bismarck's great epoch could have been achieved with ease during the Wilhelmine era, as England dropped its traditional aversion to any kind of alliance with other great powers as a result of the now changed world situation and was openly and honestly prepared on several occasions to enter into a firm alliance with Germany in order to solve all outstanding problems and to maintain world peace.

There is no doubt that Prince Bismarck would not have missed such brilliant opportunities as those offered to German diplomacy in 1895, 1898, 1899 and 1901. He would certainly have skilfully exploited the opportunities that presented themselves, and under him a German-English alliance would have been on a defensive basis, which would not only have kept the world at peace for the foreseeable future, but would also have brought the greatest cultural and material benefits for both contracting parties.

But the folly of the epigones of the great chancellor, whom Wilhelm II had chosen as his advisors in his high-handedness, and above all the aimlessly vacillating illusionary and emotional politics of Wilhelm II himself, ruined all the happy coincidences that Providence repeatedly offered us, instead of making them serve a purpose.

A considerable number of German historians and well-known publicists have rightly described the Wilhelmine era as one of missed opportunities. But was it these missed opportunities alone that led the German Reich to its appalling catastrophe.

Certainly, the failure of the German-English and German-English-Japanese alliance negotiations at the turn of the century, through the fault of Berlin's authoritative circles, was the core and starting point for the world war and a

turning point in world history. Nevertheless, it would still have been possible to avert the great catastrophe if the blinded policy of Wilhelm II and his advisors had not continued to do everything conceivable to accelerate and finally seal the encirclement of Germany.

While the second volume of my memoires mainly goes up to 1903 and only briefly or vaguely mentions the later phases of the steadily developing encirclement of Germany, the third volume contains a more detailed description of the events and reasons which completed the encirclement process and finally brought about the great world catastrophe in August 1914.

Since the publication of my memoirs, a number of publications have appeared which supplement the information I have provided.

Some of them also contain completely new, previously unknown historical material, which is of the utmost importance for the correct assessment of the prehistory of the World War. These, above all, the publication of "The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary from 1879 to 1914"(„der Geheimverträge Österreich-Ungarns von 1879 bis 1914") by the Viennese university professor Dr. Alfred Francis Pribram, as well as the "Letters of William II to the Tsar" brought to light by the Bolsheviks. I will return to these new revelations repeatedly in the course of my presentation.

In the preface to this volume, however, I should not omit to mention important additions which Sir Valentine Chiroll, the well-known English political journalist and for many years an influential contributor to the London Times, has made in the columns of that paper to some of the facts published in the first and second volumes of my memoirs.

On September 9 of this year (1920), The Times carried in-depth reviews of my memoirs in its Literary Supplement. This was followed on the same day by an editorial in The Times entitled "A Retrospect", and on September 11th and 13th, respectively, the same paper featured two long and detailed reflections by Sir Valentine Chiron, entitled "The Ex-Kaiser and England".

Since Sir Valentine Chiroll, whose name appears repeatedly in the second volume of my memoirs, is one of the very few living personalities who were privy to a large part of the most secret political events of the time, because of the

close relations he had as a representative of The Times in the nineties and even later with Holstein and almost all of Berlin's leading political circles, his additions and new revelations should not be overlooked, for they provide extremely important historical material.

As far as the history of the origin of the infamous Kruger telegram of January 1896 is concerned, the facts as Sir Valentine Chiroll sets them down correspond quite exactly to those I have reproduced in the first volume.

According to Sir Valentine Chiroll, the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Baron von Marschall, called him the day after the despatch of the Kruger dispatch and expressly explained to him that this telegram was not a mere expression of the Emperor's feelings, but a carefully considered act of state by the Government, for which His Majesty's advisers took full responsibility. He, the Secretary of State, was of the opinion that the time had come to teach England a lesson.

In the further course of the conversation, Baron von Marschall mentioned, among other things, the conversation between the Emperor and Lord Salisbury in Cowes on August 8, 1895, when listing a number of complaints. The account of this episode, as given to him (Sir Valentine Chiroll) by the Secretary of State, fully agrees with the account given in my memoirs. On the other hand, certain more detailed circumstances which led to the conversation between the Emperor and Lord Salisbury were not mentioned by me.

Briefly summarized, Sir Valentine Chiroll's account of this incident, which was set down on the basis of statements made by Baron von Marschall, the then political private secretary of Lord Salisbury, Sir Jan Malcom, and a record of the Emperor presented to him (Chiroll) by the Foreign Office in Berlin, at the instigation of Prince Bülow, culminates in the following points.

"When Lord Salisbury returned to the head of the Government after the general election of July, 1895, he was immediately requested by the German Government to give relief and assistance to Italy in the Red Sea, in view of her difficulties with Abyssinia. Lord Salisbury replied that, owing to England's somewhat strained relations with France, he could not grant the relief requested by Italy in the Red Sea without arousing the suspicions of France. However, he was prepared to recognize Italy’s claims to Albania and Tripoli in the event of a dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire as proof of its goodwill towards Italy. The German government took strong exception to this proposal, as it did not

satisfy Italy's most urgent needs in the Red Sea and, moreover, implied agreement in principle to a partition of the Ottoman Empire, an idea that was incompatible with German policy. Lord Salisbury then said to the German ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt, that in his opinion the time had come when it seemed desirable that the Powers should come to an amicable understanding among themselves as to the division of the Ottoman Empire in the event of its collapse. He also asked Count Hatzfeldt to induce the Imperial Government to draw up a draft in which its views and wishes in this regard would be set out. The German government then instructed Count Hatzfeldt to reply to Lord Salisbury that it was far from considering a possible partition of the Ottoman Empire at all, but rather attached the greatest importance to its preservation within present borders. Moreover, Count Hatzfeldt was forbidden to enter into further discussions in this direction.

In the meantime, Wilhelm II had set off for the regattas in Cowes in his yacht Hohenzollern. On his arrival in Cowes, he was presented with the above-mentioned correspondence between the Foreign Office in Berlin and Count Hatzfeldt. At the same time, the Emperor was informed that Lord Salisbury would probably come personally to Cowes to suggest to His Majesty the idea of dividing the Ottoman Empire, which, according to the Emperor, had then happened.

According to the Kaiser's memorandum, which was presented to Sir Valentine Chiroll in October 1901 at the instigation of Prince Bülow, Lord Salisbury did not propose the partition of the Turkish Empire ex abrupto (i.e immediate) on August 8, 1895, but rather, by way of introduction, referred first to his suspended discussion with Count Hatzfeldt and declared again that he was unable to grant Italy the desired relief in the Red Sea, but was willing to recognize Italy's claim to Albania and Tripoli in the event of a dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire.

When, in the course of the conversation between the Kaiser and Lord Salisbury, the latter emphasized that it was time to put an end to Abdul Hamid's misrule and in particular to the atrocious Armenian massacres, Wilhelm II defended his friend Abdul Hamid in the strongest terms, so that the conversation finally took on an extremely agitated form.

In retrospect, one wonders whether it was really necessary in this conversation to give rise to a lasting personal enmity between the Emperor and the leading English statesman, which had such an extremely damaging effect on German-English relations in the period that followed.

Would not Bismarck, for example, instead of being permanently at enmity with the influential English statesman without any reason, have immediately seized such a brilliant opportunity to turn it to his advantage.

I have already mentioned in Volumes 1 and 2 that Lord Salisbury arrived aboard the Hohenzollern for this fateful meeting with the Emperor, through no fault of his own, an hour after the agreed time. Likewise, Lord Salisbury's repeated statement to me that "he was not a 'minister of the King of Prussia,' as the Emperor sometimes seemed to assume, but the Prime Minister of England."

As Sir Valentine Chiroll further reports, Lord Salisbury told his then assistant private secretary Sir Jan Malcom on the occasion of this meeting with Wilhelm II that it would be advisable to have a third person present at future meetings with the Kaiser, as he seemed to be in the habit of putting his own words into the mouths of other personalities negotiating with him.

Of great interest among Sir Valentine Chiroll's revelations is the fact that in October 1901, in his then capacity as head of the Foreign Department of the Times of Holstein, he was asked at the instigation of Prince Bülow to come to Berlin to have a discussion with the Chancellor on Anglo-German relations, and that Prince Bülow touched on the question of an Anglo-German alliance on this occasion.

In the course of a long conversation, Sir Valentine Chiroll became convinced that, in spite of all Prince Bülow's fine phrases, he had never been serious about establishing really friendly relations or even an alliance with England.

In the first volume of my memoirs, I stated that the Imperial Chancellor Count Caprivi had made the mistake of not renewing the so-called Reinsurance Treaty with Russia until he had succeeded in bringing about an alliance with England. As far as the content of the Reinsurance Treaty itself was concerned, all I knew at the time was that both contracting powers had promised each other benevolent neutrality in the event of war with a third great power, provided that no war of aggression was waged by Russia against Austria-Hungary or by Germany against France.

At that time, however, I was not yet aware of the secret additional article in the treaty which granted Russia supremacy in Bulgaria and the closure of the straits as far as Germany was diplomatically eligible.

I had long known that Prince Bismarck had at certain times encouraged Russia to go to Constantinople and establish itself on the straits. For example, a letter from Holstein to me from October 1899 (see Memoirs, Volume 2, page 99) contains the following passage: "At the time, Prince Bismarck not only allowed the Russians to take possession of the Dardanelles, but also wanted to facilitate it as much as possible, but the Russians did not make use of the opportunity, not because they were afraid of England, which governed according to Gladstone's principles at the time, but because they did not want to jeopardize France's friendship." The same concern applies now. A few years ago, when relations between some of the great powers, notably Russia and Turkey, became temporarily strained as a result of the Armenian and Cretan turmoil, Hanotaux, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared: 'I hope that Russia will not raise the straits question, because it would be too much for us. And Russia did indeed stop at the straits.

As I said, I never suspected that Prince Bismarck had gone so far as to commit himself in writing to the Russians, by means of a completely secret additional article in the treaty of June 1887, to give diplomatic support to Russia's seizure of Constantinople.

Anyone who has ever fought against the highly unscrupulous intrigues of Russian diplomacy knows the dangers that this written agreement in the German-Russian treaty of June 1887 inevitably entailed for Germany.

In fact, Russian diplomacy was not afraid to disclose the agreement, which was to be kept strictly secret at its own condition, to other powers in order to cast suspicion on German policy and put it in a difficult position.

I refer, among other things, to remarks which Lord Salisbury made to me in January 1900. (See" Memoirs, Volume 2, page 154).

As Lord Salisbury told me on this occasion, the English government had been informed of the existence of the secret treaty by the well-known or rather notorious Russian statesman Count Ignatiev. But as Count Ignatiev was known to be a phenomenal liar, neither Sir Robert Morier, the English ambassador in Petersburg at the time, nor he himself believed the Russian diplomat's assertions.

Moreover, Lord Salisbury, as he told me, attached very little importance to the treaty, at least as far as Germany was concerned. For example, Alexander III had planned a war against Germany in the summer of 1887 (i.e. shortly after the treaty was signed) and had Lord Salisbury sound out England's possible attitude in the event of war.

Holstein was certainly right when, in a letter to a friend dated March 27, 1890 [1)], he said of the proposed treaty: "Since this agreement contradicts other agreements of a similar nature, we will be dependent on Russia's discretion after the extension. An indiscretion, even the mere knowledge that something has been concluded, is enough break all other ties “.

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1) These letters were published in “Roter Tag" in November last year.

In an addendum dated March 28, 1890, Holstein continued: "If the agreement of which I spoke becomes perfect, our good reputation and our social position will depend on Russia's discretion. Russia's interest lies in being indiscreet; for as soon as this matter is even suspected, everyone, i.e., our other friends, will distance themselves from us. We will then be dependent on dealings with Russia alone, whose social position vis-à-vis the others will thereby increase by as much as ours decreases. Russia can then impose its conditions for further dealings with us."

Of the same opinion as Holstein is the Privy Legation Councillor and Envoy a. D. Raschdau. It is mainly thanks to him that, after decades of erroneous views on the history and practical value of this much disputed reinsurance treaty, full clarity has finally been brought to this period of German history [1)].

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1) At the instigation of the then Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hermann Müller, the original text of the treaty was also published in the Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung in September 1919.

As a close associate of Prince Bismarck, hardly anyone would be more qualified to make an authentic and historically authoritative judgment on this issue than His Excellency Raschdau.

As early as April 1918, he published a succinctly worded article in the "Grenzboten" *) on the history of the reinsurance treaty, according to which it was concluded in 1881 with the involvement of Austria-Hungary, then renewed in 1884 and finally continued without Austria with a few amendments and a completely secret addition only between Russia and Germany.

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*) Die Grenzboten was a German language, national liberal magazine published from 1841 to 1922, sometimes weekly and sometimes fortnightly.

In a second article, which appeared in the "Roter Tag" on October 17, 1920, he added a considerable amount to his earlier remarks published in the "Grenzboten".

According to Raschdau, there were three considerations that certainly led to the decision not to renew the reinsurance contract.

1. the treaty was predominantly to the advantage of Russian interests; it originated from that side and its renewal was always suggested by St Petersburg.

2. it was no obstacle to a Russian-French rapprochement; even a formal agreement between Russia and France was not ruled out by the Reinsurance Treaty.

3. we were in danger of arousing the suspicion of our allied and friendly powers by unilaterally announcing our agreement and suddenly becoming politically isolated.

After the clarification of the true facts by authentic sources, there can no longer be any doubt that Chancellor Count Caprivi was rightly advised when he refused to renew the reinsurance treaty with Russia, which was due to expire in June 1890.

The method of refusal may perhaps still be debated. Perhaps it would have been more correct if Count Caprivi, instead of simply refusing to renew the treaty, had followed Raschdau's advice, which was not to simply reject the Russian proposals, but rather to first demand a modification of the treaty's content and finally to insist on its publication. In this case, as Raschdau puts it, the renunciation of the treaty would have been blamed on Russia, for the Tsar,

who was concerned about his popularity, personally placed the greatest value on secrecy, while Prince Bismarck raised no objections to its publication.

The following remarks in the concluding sentence of Raschdau's article published in the "Roter Tag" are particularly worth mentioning: "Prince Bismarck believed that the treaty would stop the preparing counter-alliance, he would probably, if it was ultimately unavoidable, have chosen other paths, and his efforts for England indicated which direction he had in mind - the reinsurance treaty, like so many other things, was tailored to the measure of the extraordinary man".

In the past year (1920), a long essay by Professor Felix Rachfahl appeared in the July issue of the "Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv" [1)] under the title " The Reinsurance Treaty, the Balkan Triple Alliance and Bismarck's alleged offer of alliance to England in 1887".

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1) Published by Prof. Dr. Bernhard Harms in Kiel. Published by Gustav Fischer in Jena.
https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.slv.vic.gov.au/stable/40441928

Whether one fully agrees or disagrees with the author on every single point, this essay by the well-known historian contains an extremely well thought-out and instructive analysis of the three important periods or episodes in the foreign policy of the great Chancellor mentioned in the title.

It would go too far to go into all of Professor Rachfahl's interesting observations and interpretations here, and I will limit myself to touching only on his interpretation of Bismarck's letter of November 22, 1887 to Lord Salisbury.

Professor Rachfahl does not see this letter as an offer of alliance from Bismarck to England. Rather, he interprets the content of the letter as if Bismarck had used it to reject the formal annexation of Germany to the Austro-Italian-English "Balkan Alliance" in order to preserve the Porte's European possessions and to declare Germany's neutrality in the Balkan question.

Perhaps Professor Rachfahl is right in his interpretation, but I would nevertheless like to point out that two of Bismarck's closest collaborators, namely

Ambassador Count Paul Hatzfeldt and Holstein who were directly involved in the negotiations between him and Lord Salisbury in their official capacity at the time, have always taken the view that Bismarck's letter to Lord Salisbury of November 22, 1887, was intended by the former as an introduction to the initiation of formal alliance negotiations with England.

Both Hatzfeldt and Holstein have often spoken to me about Bismarck's letter in this vein. Both agreed that Bismarck, who was thoroughly dissatisfied with his discussion with Emperor Alexander III in Berlin on November 18, 1887, and therefore looked to the future with more than ever concern for the external security of the Reich, intended at that time to make a radical change of tack. According to both Holstein and Hatzfeldt, the great Chancellor was willing to attempt to establish a firm alliance with England and, if successful, to finally break with Russia.

Among other things, I also refer to a passage contained in a telegram Holstein sent to me on March 20, 1901. (See Memoirs, Volume 2, page 282.

After Holstein has briefly recounted the main content of Bismarck's letter to Lord Salisbury in this telegram, he continues, "The fact that Prince Bismarck, at the height of his power, took this quite unusual step—I can think of no other case where he addressed a foreign Prime Minister in such a direct manner—proves the crucial importance he attached to Lord Salisbury's reply. This reply is also found in our secret files; it is detailed and verbose, but contains neither an assurance, which could not have been expected, nor a prospect for the future. Anyone who reads Lord Salisbury's letter must come to the conclusion that he had set himself the task of escaping an unwelcome future relationship as amicably as possible. This is also how Prince Bismarck understood the reply, as can be seen from his pencilled marginalia: He interprets the reply to mean that Lord Salisbury wanted to leave the continental concerns to the continental states and keep himself and England free from any obligation. These two letters, question and answer, provide the key to our policy since 1887. Since then, Prince Bismarck has issued the slogan that Germany must move closer to Russia, etc."

As far as I know, most well-known German historians today are of the same opinion as that expressed by Count Paul Hatzfeldt and von Holstein about Bismarck's letter to Lord Salisbury, including Professor Hans Delbrück, as can be seen from an extremely interesting and instructive essay written by him, which appeared under the title "Kaiser und Kanzler" in the April issue of the previous year (1920) in the "Preußische Jahrbücher" *.

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*) Preußische Jahrbücher - The Prussian Yearbooks were a cultural-political monthly journal of national-liberal character, published from 1858 to 1935. The article "Kaiser und Kanzler" (Emperor and Chancellor) appears on page 43 of the April 1920 edition which is located here:

https://archive.org/details/preussische-jahrbucher-april-1920

While leafing through older issues of the "Süddeutsche Monatshefte" *), I recently came across an essay by Professor Johannes Haller in Tübingen that appeared in the journal in January 1917. The essay in question is entitled "Die Auswärtige Politik des Fürsten Bülow" (The Foreign Policy of Prince Bülow), and based on the Prince's book published during the World War in a revised form under the title "Deutsche Politik" (German Politics), the author dissects the Prince's world policy in detail.

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*) Süddeutsche Monatshefte ("South German Monthly") was a conservative German magazine published in Munich between 1904 and 1936.

Professor Johannes Haller is of the opinion that the rejection of England's genuinely serious offers of alliance at the turn of the century was a serious mistake in Prince Bülow's policy, as the encirclement of Germany, which began with this rejection, developed steadily from then on and finally ended in world war. Professor Haller also criticizes in the strongest terms the foolish way in which German policy allowed itself to be exploited by the former during the Russo-Japanese War, and he emphasizes that Russia, in gratitude for our attitude, immediately afterwards sided with our enemies at Algeciras.

Haller's investigation reveals the following: "The political situation from which the world war emerged developed during the Bülow era. The world war is the fruit of the policy of encirclement, and the encirclement is the answer to Prince Bülow's world policy.

Moreover, Professor Haller also sharply opposes the fundamentally erroneous and systematically widespread view in Germany that it was primarily English trade envy against Germany that caused the encirclement and the resulting world war.

This essay by Professor Haller, which, as mentioned, appeared in the "Süddeutsche Monatshefte" in January 1917, i.e. in the middle of the World War, perhaps one of the best writings on the prehistory of the war published to date because of the true facts it contains and the well thought-out and logical conclusions it draws.

To go into all the individual points at this point would go far too far, but I cannot help but disagree with a view expressed by the author in his essay on the Moroccan crisis of 1905.

Professor Haller is inclined to the view that, given the circumstances after the disastrous mistakes of German policy, there might have been an opportunity to destroy the process of encirclement against Germany, which had been steadily developing since 1901, if Prince Bülow had consistently carried out the attempt to bring about a preventive war against France during the Moroccan crisis in the spring of 1905 at Holstein's instigation. Incidentally Professor Haller treats this question only hypothetically and says, among other things: "The true history of those unsettling and bleak months will perhaps never be written. But this much is already known today, that in the bosom of the German government itself two tendencies struggled with each other, that in the beginning the belligerent one prevailed and in the end the peaceful one won.

Since then, in his work "Zur Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges" (On the Prehistory of the World War), published in 1918, the Privy Councillor Otto Hammann has already made some important revelations about events in the unsettling and bleak months of 1905. By uncovering further facts previously unknown to the public, which I will describe in one of the following chapters, I hope to be able to demonstrate that the party that was striving to prevent the war at the time was entirely justified, not only from a general human, but above all from a purely German point of view, in fighting the intentions of Holstein, in whose wake Prince Bülow unfortunately found himself for a time, with all means at its disposal.

I would also like to mention a sentence that Professor Haller made when discussing the Moroccan crisis of 1905. It reads: "All this is certainly only of historical value today, but Prince Bülow is not right when he fundamentally rejects any retrospective consideration of this kind as 'conjectural politics'. All politics is basically conjectural, as far as it reckons with factors that can only be . But if one wanted to cut off the discussion of the question of what would have

happened if one not acted in a certain way but differently in a certain case, this would mean renouncing all criticism in political history and also the possibility of learning from history.

Chapter 1

On the whole, the ridiculous superstition is still widespread in public opinion in Germany today that the causes of the World War are to be found primarily in the fact that German diplomacy failed to achieve a lasting, firm alliance with Russia against our natural hereditary enemy, namely England.

If one asks the beer-bench politicians who advocate this viewpoint on what facts they base their views, one brings up the legend of the political legacy of Kaiser Wilhelm I, who allegedly said to his grandson Wilhelm II on his deathbed: "Preserve and cultivate friendship with Russia." Others, however, speak of the traditional friendship between the House of Hohenzollern and the House of Romanov, etc.

If you ask the same people why England is our natural hereditary enemy and what the English had ever done to us before the outbreak of the World War, they initially have nothing to say, but then they babble about perfidious Albion, which no one should trust, and after they have thrown around all sorts of similar banal slogans for a while, they suddenly start to boast about their so-called knowledge of history and tell you gruesome stories about the treason that the English are supposed to have committed against the Old Fritz in the Seven Years' War and other similar things.

But it is not only in the atmosphere of the average beer-bench politician that such erroneous views are still found today, but also in many so-called higher, educated circles, which have forgotten nothing and learned nothing, and despite all bitter experiences, still persist in their old political indolence and ignorance, and in their lack of judgment, only deal with misunderstood slogans in discussions.

As far as England's alleged traditional enmity towards us is concerned, I refer, among other things, to a brochure published in 1919 by Dr. Paul Harms entitled "Vom Ursprung des Weltkrieges" (On the Origin of the World War) in a special edition of the "Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten" (Leipzig Latest News), in which the author very aptly states: "It has been Prussia-Germany's destiny in world history to work its way up to become a great power on the same battlefront with England." But what was the truth of the much-vaunted, traditional friendship between Russia and Germany, or rather the houses of Romanov and Hohenzollern.

Recently, so much nonsense has been written on this subject that runs counter to the true historical facts that it is worth briefly examining the true relationship between Prussia-Germany and Russia over the last 150 years.

It is well known that the Empress Elizabeth of Russia, who, like Madame de Pompadour, who was then all-powerful in Paris, felt extremely offended by the malicious jokes which Frederick the Great used to vent on these two ladies, as well as on the Empress Maria Theresa, and therefore, in no small part out of personal revenge, intervened in the Seven Years' War on the side of the many enemies of the great Prussian King.

After her death in January 1762, her nephew, Peter III of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp, ascended the Russian throne as Peter III. He was an ardent admirer and worshipper of Frederick the Great, and thus the political relationship between Russia and Prussia immediately took a turn for the better. However, after only six months of reign, he was assassinated by the Orlovs, and his widow, a Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst by birth, had herself proclaimed Empress Catherine II. She, too, was, apart from some political differences, an admirer of Frederick the Great. One need only read her correspondence with the well-known encyclopedist in Paris, Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, published about 20 years ago by the St. Petersburg State Archives, to get an idea of the admiration with which she looked up to the great Prussian king. Like Frederick the Great, she too was to a considerable extent a representative of the enlightened absolutism prevailing at that time.

The view, which recurs from time to time, that Catherine II was a natural daughter of Frederick the Great is, of course, a myth. At least, there is not the slightest historical evidence from which one could conclude that Frederick the Great ever had a love affair with Catherine II's mother, the admittedly very frivolous Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst.

The three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793 and 95 between Russia, Austria and Prussia are known to have taken place during the reign of Catherine II.

Perhaps less well known to the general public is the fact a secret Russian-Prussian treaty directed against Turkey was concluded between Catherine II and Frederick the Great, according to which Prussia undertook not only to approve of Russia's action against Constantinople and the straits, but also to support it

diplomatically. In other words, an agreement similar to the secret supplementary article in the German-Russian Reinsurance Treaty 1887! Not long before his death, however, Frederick the Great terminated this treaty because he had come to the conclusion that a Russian advance against the straits and a Russian occupation of Constantinople could not be in Prussia's interests.

When, shortly before the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, the anti-Russian party surrounding Frederick William IV urged Prussia to join the Western powers against Russia, a memorandum was prepared at the Foreign Office in Berlin at their instigation. It was based on Frederick the Great's notes on the reasons why he had terminated the Eastern Treaty with Russia. As is well known, it was in no small part due to the influence of Bismarck, who was then still Minister to the Federal Diet in Frankfurt am Main, that Prussia did not join the Western powers during the Crimean War, but instead remained benevolently neutral toward Russia. I will return to this point in more detail later.

In Russia, as in all of Europe, there has been much talk during the last hundred years about the political testaments of Peter the Great, as well as that of Catherine the Great, according to which the seizure of Constantinople and the permanent control of the Straits of the Russian nation are set as the main political aim, and the achievement of this aim is made a sacred duty of every Russian.

The alleged testament of Peter the Great must certainly be regarded as apocryphal; in any case, there is no historical evidence from which one could conclude that he ever left such a testament.

The situation is different with Catherine II. After her death in 1796, pencil notes were found in her bedroom, which she had probably written during sleepless nights, and in which the seizure of Constantinople and the Straits was actually presented as an aim of Russian policy, which was to be never lost sight of and which was to be achieved with the greatest effort.

As is evident from her letters to Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, she also chose the names Alexander and Constantine for her two eldest grandchildren, the sons of Emperor Paul I, as a sort of historical omen. The first in memory of Alexander the Great—the civilizer of Asia—the second in honour of Constantine the Great, who was the first to erect the Cross of Christ in Constantinople.

When, during the first Russo-Turkish War (1768 to 1774), Turkey found itself in a very difficult situation due to the complete decline of its military

system, as well as the uprising of the Sultan's Christian subjects and the defection of the Bey of Egypt, when the Crimea came into Russian possession, the Turkish squadron was destroyed in the port of Chesme, and Moldavia and Wallachia were conquered by the Russian general Romanzow, Austria did not intervene in the war on Turkey's behalf only because the question of the partition of Poland had just begun to arise at that time.

Austria, as well as France and England however, looked at Russia's tremendous successes in arms with great concern, and the "Oriental Question" arose.

From then on, the doctrine was championed in Europe that the most advantageously situated and perhaps richest country in the world in terms of natural resources had to remain under Turkish tyranny and mismanagement. Of course, as is usually the case with highly political issues, this was for reasons of justice, civilization, and humanity!

All the European powers, in contrast to Russia, remained more or less faithful to this constitution for a century; only Prussia-Germany, depending on the strength of the pressure and influence which Russian diplomacy was able to exert in Berlin, alternately with or without success, constantly vacillated back and forth on the oriental question [1)].

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1) In the Second Turkish War (1787-1792), the unpredictable Joseph II of Austria allied himself with Catherine to participate in the conquests, but his successor, Leopold II, made peace with Turkey in 1791 and renounced Turkish territory. The Greek War of Independence, supported by Russia, France, and England, also represented a departure from this principle.

After Frederick the Great had terminated his treaty with Russia directed against Turkey, his successor, the fat Prussian King Frederick William II, even led to a temporary Anglo-Prussian alliance directed against Russia on the Eastern Question.

What has been understood as the so-called traditional friendship between the Romanov and Hohenzollern dynasties over the past 100 years arose at the beginning of the 18th century in a joint struggle against the increasingly

pervasive ideas of the French Revolution and its heir, the Corsican usurper Napoleon. The chivalrous veneration that Alexander I of Russia felt for the beautiful Queen Louise of Prussia undoubtedly contributed considerably to further strengthening the Russian-Prussian friendship that had then arisen on the natural basis of common interests.

After the first joint Prussian-Russian brotherhood in arms against Napoleon had been temporarily broken by the unfortunate battles on the Pregel and the Memel, which were soon followed by the Peace of Tilsit, when Alexander I felt compelled to separate his cause from that of Prussia, the well-known Convention of Neutrality of Tauroggen took place in 1812 between the Prussian General Yorck and the Russian General Diebitsch, from which a new, this time successful, joint Prussian-Russian campaign against Napoleon developed in the form of the Wars of Liberation.

At the Congress of Vienna, Prussia's status as a great power was restored. It was more than amply compensated on German soil for the Polish territories it had to cede to Russia from its possessions acquired during the Third Partition of Poland. This circumstance enabled Prussia, as the strongest purely German power, to ultimately position itself at the forefront of the German unification movement, excluding the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, whose population was largely Slavic.

To oppose the idea of German unity with all his might and to nip it in the bud was now the main aim which Emperor Nicholas I of Russia, who came to power in 1825 in place of his deceased brother Alexander, pursued in his policy towards Prussia.

After the suppression of the Polish Uprising in 1831, Nicholas I assumed, to a certain extent, the leadership role on the European continent, which had previously been held by the reactionary Austrian Chancellor Metternich since the Congress of Vienna, until Napoleon III finally seized the leadership during the Crimean War and even more so after the Peace of Paris in 1856. After his fall in 1870, it was Bismarck who took over the leadership of European politics. Since his dismissal in 1890, there has been no other personality of whom one could say that he played a leading, purposeful, political role in Europe, except perhaps Edward VII of England, who, forced by the megalomania of his nephew William II and his advisors, but especially by the adventurous, aggressive naval policy of Herr von Tirpitz, joined France and Russia, thereby not only reviving the almost

extinct idea of revenge in France, but above all rekindling the brutal Russian-Pan-Slavic drive for expansion to the West.

Returning to Nicholas I after this digression, it should be emphasized again that he considered it one of his most important political tasks to stifle the German drive for unity and, in this respect, followed completely in Metternich's footsteps. It is well known that Nicholas I advocated the preservation of the German Confederation under Habsburg rule, which had long since become rotten, or rather, weak in its embryonic state, and that, primarily through his intervention on behalf of Austria, Prussia was forced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Olomouc in 1850, which not only buried all its hopes of assuming leadership in the question of German unity, but even those of Prussian supremacy in northern Germany.

Nicholas I regarded and treated his brother-in-law, Frederick William IV of Prussia, as well as all other German princes, merely as his henchman. For example, during the Polish Revolution of 1830, he ostentatiously ignored the King of Prussia and issued orders to Prussian generals stationed with their security troops on the Russian-Polish border. The court and government in Berlin, however, hardly dared to intervene in the face of such and similar autocratic abuses, with the possible exception of the then Prince of Prussia, later Emperor William I.

Public opinion in Germany felt the humiliating treatment by the Russian autocrat, to which the German princes and governments mostly submitted without further ado, severely and bitterly.

Nothing is more indicative of a nation's true feelings than natural popular humour. When, for example, it became public knowledge that the Russian ambassador to the Federal Diet in Frankfurt am Main always brought his own mustard when invited to dine with his diplomatic colleagues, the representatives of the German federal states—probably the famous Sarepta mustard, which grows on the bend of the Volga and is undoubtedly the best in the world—a malicious joke was made and widely disseminated that this was a hint that all German affairs must be handled with Russian mustard.

The decades of pressure and dependence that Prussia and the whole of Germany had to endure under Cossack rule weighed on them like a nightmare, until the Crimean War and the death of Nicholas I brought relief.

Relations between Russia and France had been largely friendly since the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna, despite disagreements over the Eastern Question. The relationship only changed again when Napoleon III assumed the presidency of the Second French Republic in December 1848 and, after a general national referendum, had himself proclaimed hereditary emperor.

Towards the end of the 1820s, during the reign of Charles X of France, relations between Petersburg and Paris were so close that a joint plan for the dismemberment of Prussia could be discussed. Nicholas I sought to gain control of East Prussia, and if possible, West Prussia, Posen, and part of Silesia, while in Paris a movement, led by the then young politician and historian Adolph Thiers, began demanding the conquest of the left bank of the Rhine and even other parts of Germany. Just as negotiations between the Russian ambassador in Paris and the government of Charles X regarding the planned raid against Prussia were beginning to take shape, the July Revolution of 1830 broke out, thwarting both the French and Nicholas I's plans for plunder. In the 30s and 40s, during the reign of the citizen-king Louis Philippe, Nicholas repeatedly brought his robbery ideas to Paris, but all discussions on the matter came to nothing.

This is what the much-praised traditional friendship between the closely related houses of Romanov and Hohenzollern looked like back then!

It is generally assumed that the popular slogan "The road to Constantinople leads through the Brandenburg Gate" originated with the Pan-Slavist leaders of the 1870s, such as Katkov, Skobelev, Milyutin, and others. In fact, this phrase was coined in the 1830s by none other than the renowned Russian statesman Count Karl Robert von Nesselrode, who represented Russia at the Congress of Vienna and served as Foreign Minister in St. Petersburg from 1816 to 1856. Under Alexander I, he was a fervent advocate of the "Holy Alliance." Under Nicholas I, however, he adapted to the brutal expansionist ideas of his monarch. One of his sons lived in London for many years and was a well-known figure in English society. As I often heard the old Duke of Cambridge relate, Count Nesselrode, who lived in London, had already told him, the Duke, in the early 1860s—long before Skobelev, Katkov, and their comrades played a role in Russia—that such a slogan had been coined by his father in the 1830s. With this statement, Minister Nesselrode wanted to express that if France received sufficient compensation on German soil in the event of a dismemberment of Prussia, it would be inclined to allow Russia a free hand in the Eastern Question.

In 1853, Nicholas I considered the time had come to implement Catherine's plan: to limit Turkey to Asia, establish Russian hegemony on the Balkan Peninsula, and bring the straits under Russian control. Turkey's refusal to recognize Russia as protector of the Greek Church in the Ottoman Empire led to the occupation of the Danubian Principalities by Russian Field Marshal Paskevich in September 1853, to which Turkey responded by declaring war on Russia on October 4. Following the attack and destruction of a Turkish squadron by Russian Admiral Nakhimov near Sinope, England and France declared war on Russia on March 28, 1854, in order to counter Nicholas I's massive plans of conquest, to preserve Turkey's possessions, and thus to save the balance of power in Europe threatened by Russia.

Long before the declaration of war, English and French diplomats had been working diligently to Austria and Prussia to take up arms against Nicholas I in order to bring about a complete encirclement of Russia.

Emperor Nicholas had hoped to count on Austria's gratitude, as he had recently rendered a great service to the Habsburg dynasty by suppressing the Hungarian uprising of 1848 with Russian troops. However, he was gravely mistaken in this assumption. After his first meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Vienna, the French ambassador was able to report to his government: " that Austria will surprise the world by its ingratitude " [1] Although Austria did not directly intervene in the war, it forced Russia to evacuate the Danubian Principalities by sending its troops there. On December 2, 1854, it even concluded an alliance with the Western powers and established considerable military forces in Transylvania and Galicia.

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1) that Austria will amaze the world by its ingratitude.

In Prussia, the Russian and anti-Russian parties around Frederick William IV were engaged in a long, bitter struggle, until the pro-Russian party finally emerged victorious. Despite all the enticements and pressure from the Western powers, Prussia remained benevolently neutral toward Russia throughout the Eastern War.

On March 4, 1854, shortly before the Western powers declared war on Russia, a conversation took place between the Prince of Prussia, later Emperor William I, and Bismarck, who was then Prussian ambassador to the Federal Diet

in Frankfurt am Main. During this discussion, "an agitated argument broke out between the Prince and Bismarck."

At that time, the former's sympathies were entirely with the Western powers, especially England, where, as is well known, he had lived in exile for a considerable period after the 1848 revolution and had retained the friendliest feelings for that country in memory of his stay there. He was also enthusiastic about England's liberal political institutions and even considered a parliamentary form of government, as it existed there, to be the only correct one. It was only during the period of conflict with the Prussian people's representatives at the beginning of the 1860s over the question of army reorganization that he was forced back into more reactionary channels. Deep down, he harboured an insurmountable resentment against his brother-in-law, Nicholas I of Russia, as his Prussian pride rebelled against the many humiliations that this ruthless despot had inflicted on the Prussian state [1)].

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1) It is well known that the disgrace inflicted by Austria on the Prussians at Olomouc in 1850 was due in no small measure to Nicholas I's anti-Prussian attitude.

As is well known, Bismarck had always paid homage to the Cossack world view, but he was far too determined a statesman to allow himself to be guided by personal sympathies or antipathies when making important decisions on foreign policy.

Therefore, when, during his conversation with the Prince of Prussia on March 4, 1854, he opposed the Prince's view that Prussia must unconditionally join the Western powers and declare war on Russia, and defended the position that Prussia could not abandon its neutrality during the Eastern War, he did so not, as he was accused at the time, out of personal sympathy for Russia, but out of purely practical political considerations for the future. He foresaw that a re-establishment of the German Empire, excluding Austria, could only be achieved with Russia's benevolent neutrality toward Prussia, since neither France nor England could be expected to promote this idea in the slightest.

In this memorable conversation, Bismarck also used the expression, among others, that Prussia would become the Landsknecht (* servant of the land or country) of England and sink to the position of an Indian prince if it joined the Western powers.

The Prince of Prussia seemed to have been very annoyed by Bismarck's position, because that same evening he wrote a few lines to the then Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Otto von Manteuffel, in which he said, among other things, that the views expressed to him by the Bundestag envoy, Herr von Bismarck, were like those of a high school student.

Nevertheless, thanks to his personal influence, which he successfully brought to bear on Frederick William IV, Bismarck managed to enforce Prussia's benevolent neutrality for Russia during the War in the Orient.

Bismarck's remarks ultimately gave rise to the catchphrase of the "Landsknecht of England", which was widely used in Germany and has become more and more ingrained in German minds from generation to generation, surviving to this day.

But nothing is more dangerous than a slogan taken out of context. What the many uncritical political idiots who constantly employ such slogans fail to grasp is, as Heraclitus said almost two and a half thousand years ago, that "everything flows." Politics flows the fastest, and what was right in 1854 is no longer necessarily right a year later, let alone 30.

It is precisely those chauvinist circles, which for decades have only ever worked with misunderstood quotations from Bismarck and have presented themselves as the appointed executors of his alleged will, without ever having known or understood his policies, who are among the main culprits for the terrible blows that have befallen the Bismarckian Empire and Germanness as such.

The Eastern or Crimean War, as it is more commonly called, took the unfavourable course for Russia that Bismarck had foreseen. On March 2, 1855, Nicholas I died, and his son and successor, Alexander II, showed more inclination towards peace. Peace was finally agreed at the Congress of Paris in March 1856. Of all the conditions so humiliating for Russia, the one she felt most was the prohibition on maintaining a navy in the Black Sea, even though this provision applied to all powers. Bismarck's shrewd statesmanship was able to exploit this circumstance extremely skilfully to achieve his goals a few years later. His policy was based in particular on Russia's hatred of Napoleon III, as well as the

contempt with which Alexander II looked down on Austria for its ungrateful, treacherous attitude.

Naturally, Russia now developed a rapprochement with Prussia, to which it owed a debt of gratitude for its benevolent neutrality in the Crimean War. The relationship between the two powers became even more intimate with the conclusion of the so-called Alvensleben Military Convention, which, at Bismarck's request, Prussia pledged in February 1863 to lend Russia its assistance in suppressing the Polish Revolution that had broken out at that time.

Rarely had Bismarck temporarily made himself so unpopular with public opinion in Prussia-Germany through a foreign policy measure as he did with this very move, for at that time there was no sympathy for Russia in Germany. Yet Bismarck's far-sighted statesmanship was justified, for without this close ties to Russia, the wars founded on historical necessity that established the German Empire would have been impossible. As Bismarck said of himself, both during the Crimean War and on this occasion, he was accused of "smelling of Russian leather."

After some hesitation, Alexander II initially gave Prussia a free hand in the 1866 war against Austria. After the great victory at Königgrätz, however, people in St. Petersburg were already beginning to regret their benevolent neutrality for Prussia. In any case, it is now a proven fact that Bismarck decided to conclude peace with Austria so quickly in Nikolsburg not because of Napoleon III's threats of war, which he did not attach much importance to at the time due to France's lack of military preparation, but because of the constant notes from St. Petersburg demanding a solution to the Greater German Question through an international conference. Thus, just as under Nicholas I, Russia, under his successor, wanted to keep its fingers in purely German affairs in order to suppress, if at all possible, the idea of German unity.

As for Russia's benevolent attitude toward Prussia-Germany during the French War of 1870/71, it now seems fairly certain that it was largely due to the extremely cleverly calculated offers Bismarck made to Prince Gorchakov in the spring of 1870 during secret personal discussions regarding a change in the provisions of the Paris Peace Treaty of 1856, concerning the prohibition of a Russian Black Sea fleet. Bismarck kept his promise on this occasion to work towards the repeal of this clause of the peace treaty, which was so burdensome and humiliating for Russia, and it was only thanks to his skilful and successful

efforts that a Russian navy was able to re-establish itself in the Black Sea so soon.

Moreover, the general mood in Russia during the Franco-Prussian War was thoroughly anti-German, and almost only Alexander II, who possessed great personal respect for his elderly uncle, William I, showed genuine sympathy for the Prussian-German cause. But later, the originally mild-minded Russian ruler increasingly developed the despotic temperament of his father, Nicholas I. Just as the latter had regarded the King of Prussia, like all other German princes, as his henchmen, so Alexander II also demanded absolute subordination and military obedience from the newly formed German Empire in all important European affairs, especially those in the East. He believed he was justified in this view through his benevolent attitude during the Franco-Prussian War, especially since he had kept Austria, then under the influence of the anti-Prussian Count Beust, in check. Added to this was the insurmountable personal jealousy which the Russian Chancellor, Prince Gorchakov, felt against Bismarck, whose great patron he had formerly been, because of his tremendous successes, so that the relationship between Russia and the young German Empire very soon began to deteriorate.

After only a short time, the Three Emperors' Alliance, formed in 1873, proved to be a chimera. Even the Treaty of Neutrality, intended as a continuation, or rather a renewal, of the Three Emperors' Alliance, which was concluded with the involvement of Austria-Hungary in 1881, renewed in 1884, and finally continued without Austria, with some modifications and a completely secret addition, only between Russia and Germany in 1887, until Count Caprivi abandoned it in 1890, failed in any way to prevent a German-Russian war from repeatedly appearing imminent during this period.

If a protective and defensive alliance on an equal footing between Germany and Russia had been possible at all, Bismarck would certainly have brought it about. But how could Germany enter into an alliance with Russia in which the latter was not even willing to guarantee Germany's full possession of Europe, especially not Alsace-Lorraine, but claimed for itself that Germany, as its vassal, had to render unconditional military service in the Oriental question? In 1876, as is well known, Bismarck tried twice to reach a protective alliance with Russia, but the latter refused in the most decisive manner to guarantee Germany's status in Europe. Therefore, in November of the same year, Bismarck opted for Austria by having Alexander II reply to his peremptory demand that Germany should

declare that it would remain neutral in the event of a Russo-Austrian war by saying that Germany could not concede that Austria's position as a great power would be shaken or even destroyed.

In Russia itself, the Pan-Slavist movement grew in scope from year to year, and at times its waves reached such a high level that the resulting threat of war could only be averted with the greatest difficulty. After all, it was largely conscious and carefully considered Pan-Slavist machinations, combined with the unconscious stupidity of German and Austrian diplomacy, that brought about the great catastrophe of the World War in August 1914.

In the summer of 1878, the Congress of Berlin had brought about a reorganization of affairs in the Orient, which was absolutely necessary after the Russo-Turkish War. Russia was extremely dissatisfied with the course of the Congress, at which it found itself completely isolated, and ultimately blamed Germany for its failures. When, in the summer of 1879, Russian, German, Austrian, English, and Turkish delegates were on site in the Balkans working on the implementation of the Treaty of Berlin, the German delegates, in contradiction to Russia, sided with the views of their English and Austrian colleagues on various specific issues. This fact was entirely sufficient to prompt Alexander II to immediately (on August 15) write a letter to his uncle, Kaiser Wilhelm I, written in violent and even insulting language, threatening Germany with war. The Tsar's actions then prompted Bismarck to conclude as quickly as possible the alliance with Austria, which had long been in the air. This alliance was signed on October 7, 1879, but after heavy fighting by Bismarck, was only approved by the old Emperor on October 16.

Under the stubborn and fanatical German-hater Alexander III, German-Russian relations deteriorated even more on the whole, and Bismarck, who had already repeatedly sought an alliance with England in vain in the 1970s, strove more than ever to gain a firm alliance with England, but again without success. Nevertheless, Bismarck succeeded in the fall of 1887 in bringing about the so-called Oriental or Balkan Alliance between Austria, Italy and England through his extremely skilful policy against a new approach planned by Russia in the Oriental question.

Indeed, at first glance, Bismarck's actions may appear Machiavellian, considering that only a few months earlier (on June 18, 1887) he had concluded the secret Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, which also contained the highly secret supplementary clause obligating Germany not only to permit, but even to provide

moral and diplomatic support for, any Russian action in Bulgaria and ultimately against Constantinople. However, this view must be countered by the fact that, due to Alexander III's blatant threats of war and anti-German machinations in midsummer and autumn 1887, such as the incident of the Bulgarian letters *, which may or may not have been forged, Bismarck was determined for a time to consider the Reinsurance Treaty abrogated and, if possible, to contain the danger of war through permanent agreements with England.

As for the Oriental or Balkan League, which was established by an exchange of notes on December 12, 1887, between England and Austria, and to which Italy joined four days later, this agreement between the three powers was essentially nothing more than a supplement or extension of the treaty concluded between England and Italy on February 12 (1887) concerning the status quo and the protection of Italy's maritime interests in the Mediterranean, which Austria joined soon after, on March 24.

On May 20, 1882, after long, difficult negotiations, the Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria, and Italy was formed. Even then, both Austria and especially Italy had demanded that England be invited to join this new alliance, but Bismarck had resisted this step because his opposite number, Gladstone, was currently in power in England, and he therefore knew full well that such a demarche would be completely hopeless. Only shortly before, Lord Beaconsfield had died. Bismarck had entered into promising alliance negotiations with him during the Congress of Berlin in 1878. These negotiations, however, automatically ended with the fall of the Beaconsfield ministry in the so-called "Bulgarian atrocities elections" in April 1880.

When negotiations for the renewal of the Triple Alliance began at the beginning of 1887, the Italian Foreign Minister, Count Robilant, came to Berlin and explained to Bismarck that Italy, due to its long, unprotected coastline and its other interests in the Mediterranean, would be unable to renew the treaty unless England acceded to it or at least committed itself to using its fleet to protect the coast and all other maritime interests of Italy. Bismarck was initially greatly dismayed and embarrassed by Count Robilant's categorical declaration. He finally decided to contact Lord Salisbury on this urgent matter through the then British ambassador in Berlin, Sir Edward Malet, and also the ambassador Count Paul Hatzfeldt in London. The matter was important because at that time General Boulanger was up to mischief in France and preparing a war of revenge against Germany. The general was supported in his efforts by the Pan-Slavists in Russia. At this very time, a very significant rapprochement had also taken place between

the official circles of Russia and France. The excitement was further heightened by the well-known "Schnäbele Affair."

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1) The Slavic Benevolent Society in Moscow even provided General Boulanger with enormous sums of money for his purposes.

During his repeated discussions with Sir Edward Malet, Bismarck soon became convinced that the Salisbury Ministry was unwilling to join the Triple Alliance without further ado, lest it commit itself to such far-reaching, general obligations. Bismarck, however, succeeded in bringing about a treaty between England and Italy, which, as already mentioned, was agreed upon between the two powers on February 12, 1887, and concerned the status quo and the protection of Italy's maritime interests in the Mediterranean. Soon after the renewal of the Triple Alliance, which took place with some modifications on February 20, Austria acceded to this treaty on March 24 (1887), and following this agreement, as already explained above, on December 12, the Oriental or Balkan League was brought into being between the three powers to maintain the status quo in the Near East, also under the aegis of Bismarck, in which, as he expressed it, Germany would, if necessary, form the rearguard.

This latter treaty blocked Russia's path to Constantinople more than ever before, and not only that, but it completely isolated her in the Balkans. Through the secret alliance between Austria and Romania, concluded in 1883, which Germany joined, through the Austro-Serbian agreement, and finally through the fact that Ferdinand I of Bulgaria, filled with hatred for the Russian government, was enabled to maintain his throne through the joint efforts of Austria, England, and Italy, Russian influence in the Balkans was virtually broken for a long period of years. The fact is that Nikita of Montenegro was "Russia's only friend," as Alexander III expressed himself in a dinner speech in 1889.

The consequence of its isolation and impotence in the Balkans was that Russia decided to first attempt to satisfy its expansionist ambitions in another theatre, namely the Far East.

But here, too, the Russian bear was checkmated by the prudent and far-sighted policy of England, which concluded an alliance with Japan in 1902. Instead of Bismarck, Wilhelm II and his incompetent henchmen now stood at the helm of diplomacy in Germany. He and the imitators of the great chancellor ultimately managed, through their clumsy policies, to fall between two stools, not

only in the Far East, but ultimately also in the Middle East, in the allegiance of Austria.

After Count Robilant declared in Berlin at the beginning of 1887 that Italy would not be able to extend the Triple Alliance unless England assumed some form of protection for Italy's interests in the Mediterranean, and since the conclusion of the Mediterranean and Balkan treaties between Italy, England, and Austria, the Triple Alliance of Germany-Austria-Italy existed, in a sense, only under the condition of England's guarantee of Italy's Mediterranean and Oriental interests.

No one was more aware of this fact than Bismarck's first successor, Count Caprivi. After he had quite rightly abandoned the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia because of the highly secret supplementary clause concerning German approval and diplomatic support for Russian action in the Balkans and against the Straits, his main goal was to persuade England to join the Triple Alliance, or at least to maintain good relations with England, so that the premises on which the Triple Alliance was based would not be rendered illusory and its continued existence called into question. For example, a private letter written by Imperial Chancellor Count Caprivi to my boss in London, Count Paul Hatzfeldt, in the summer of 1893 contained the following passage: "I completely agree with Your Excellency that the aim of our foreign policy must always be to gradually win England over to official membership in the Triple Alliance. In any case, everything that could disrupt the friendly relationship that fortunately exists between us and England must be avoided as far as possible. Should a serious and lasting estrangement arise between the two powers, the continued existence of the Triple Alliance would be called into question, if only because of Italy, and at the very least its effect on maintaining European peace would be greatly weakened. A situation could even arise that would force us to once again fall back entirely on Russia. But then woe betide us! In this case, we would have to submit ourselves at the mercy of the Russian colossus, and our great power status and all our other fine aspirations would probably be over."

Unfortunately, Count Caprivi's successors, especially Prince Bülow, did not share their predecessor's fundamentally sound view of the continued existence and influence of the Triple Alliance on the maintenance of European peace with the secret collaboration of England, although the Italian government had not failed to issue repeated warnings to this effect over the years.

When, at the time of the Kruger Telegram in January 1818, relations between Germany and England were extremely tense and the outbreak of hostilities seemed almost inevitable, the then Italian ambassador in London, General Ferrero, made the following statement to me: "My government has unfortunately seen itself compelled to declare in Berlin as well as Vienna that in the event of an Anglo-German conflict, it must consider the entire Triple Alliance Treaty as abrogated, because the preconditions on which the treaty is based will cease to exist the moment the English fleet, due to our alliance with Germany, can no longer assume the protection of our Mediterranean interests. No one would regret such an eventuality more than myself, since I have always been a strong supporter of the alliance with Germany and Austria. Under my leadership, the military convention with Germany of May 1888 was also drafted in our War Ministry. According to this convention, we are obliged, in the event of war between Germany and France, to transport six army corps and three cavalry divisions over the Brenner Pass to southern Germany. for use on the left wing of the German armies in the Vosges. Believe me, it was not easy at the time to achieve such far-reaching military concessions, as many voices in the Council of Ministers and also in the army were raised against this agreement."

To my knowledge, the Italian statesman Visconti-Venosta, among others, in his capacity as Minister of Foreign Affairs at the turn of the century, also sent a similarly stern warning to the German government.

In any case, the fact remains that when war broke out in August 1914, Italy was in no way obligated to side with Germany. For, on the one hand, Italy was only obligated to help us if we were attacked by France without prior provocation, and, on the other hand, England had already denounced both the Anglo-Italian-Austrian Mediterranean Treaty and the Balkan Treaty of 1887 several years ago. The fact that the influential political and military circles in Berlin, since Count Caprivi, have not given any serious consideration to the prerequisites for Italy's alliance seems downright monstrous.

The more often one reads Wilhelm II's letters to "Niki", the more one is faced with a riddle. It has long been known to anyone reasonably well-informed what derogatory remarks Nicholas II used to make about William II to other sovereigns and their statesmen, and only recently have we obtained new evidence of this from the records of diplomats accredited in Petersburg at the time.

In Berlin, the Triple Alliance was allowed to disintegrate, England was shunned for no reason, but instead they chased after "the phantom of the traditional friendship between the houses of Hohenzollern and Romanov!”

Chapter II.

I have already mentioned elsewhere that in October 1902 I resigned from my post as Counselor at the Embassy in London, after having been entrusted with the management of the affairs for a long time due to the persistent poor health of Ambassador Count Paul Hatzfeldt. I have also explained the reasons why I insisted on being relieved of my post and that after a dinner on October 30, 1902, with State Secretary Baron von Richthofen, I incurred the Kaiser's disfavor by telling him that I was tired, that I saw a bleak future for the German Empire, and that I did not believe I would be able to do any productive work under the prevailing circumstances.

Nevertheless, I continued to be politically active, even though I had actually intended to withdraw from politics completely so as not to have to bother myself any more.

Already during my official position in London, especially at the time of my alliance negotiations with England and Japan, I had repeatedly warned in my reports to Berlin of the impending danger of a general encirclement of Germany, but always without success.

In May 1903, after King Edward's first official visit to Paris, I wrote a memorandum (see Volume II, page 422) for Prince Bülow, in which I stated, among other things: "A new Triple Alliance (England-France-Russia) is now forming, which, even if it is not allowed to take written form, would at least cause us political and economic difficulties throughout the world."

For years, I suffered, to use Count Peter Shuvalov's well-known expression, from the "cauchemar des coalitions" (cauchemar * of coalitions), without finding any understanding for this, unfortunately all too justified, nightmare in Wilhelmstrasse or other influential political circles in Berlin. On the contrary, I was rather laughed at, called a pessimist or a complainer, and was even subjected to direct persecution by certain personalities in Wilhelmstrasse.

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* cauchemar - a terrifying or deeply distressing dream

Despite the alliance concluded between England and Japan on January 30, 1902, Russia had by no means abandoned its aggressive expansionist policy in the Far East. Although Russia had declared, after the Anglo-Japanese alliance was formed, that it would evacuate Manchuria within 18 months, it made no attempt to do so. On the contrary, it amassed ever-larger troops there and even began to seriously realize its intentions in Korea. In St. Petersburg, under the aegis of several greedy Russian grand dukes and major speculators, a company had been formed that intended to appropriate and exploit the enormous forest complexes along the Yalu River in Korea. Since all negotiations between Russia and Japan remained fruitless and only made the irreconcilable differences more apparent, war broke out between the two countries at the beginning of February 1904, after Japan's final demands - the evacuation of Manchuria and free trade there, as well as Japanese dominance in Korea - remained unanswered by Russia.

The prehistory of this war, which was so significant in world history, along with other events still unknown to the public, will now be discussed.

Since my discussions on a German-Anglo-Japanese alliance with Count Hayashi [*)] in the spring of 1901, which finally ended, through the folly of German diplomacy, in January 1902 with the Anglo-Japanese alliance without Germany's participation, I have remained in the closest of relations with the Japanese statesman throughout the years he served as Japanese ambassador in London. He was particularly grateful to me for continuing to support him in bringing about the Anglo-Japanese alliance, even after Germany withdrew from the negotiations [1)]. While he was generally very reserved and cautious in all his actions and statements, he always treated me with the most ruthless frankness. Before the outbreak and during the Russo-Japanese War, I also stood by him as much as I could, and he regarded me, as he put it, as his and Japan's best and most reliable friend in Europe. On the whole, he possessed the coolness and self-control characteristic of the Japanese, which almost never allows outward signs of excitement to appear. However, when, for example, two days after the outbreak of war, he was at my place for breakfast in Grosvenor Square, my then six-year-old daughter suddenly came into the dining room, quite spontaneously rushed up to him, took his hand, and said, "I hope the dear little Japs will win the war," he could no longer contain himself with excitement and emotion, and bright tears streamed from his eyes for quite some time.

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*) Count Hayashi Gonsuke (1860–1939) was a diplomat of the Empire of Japan.

1) I did this, as is evident from the documents in the second volume of my memoirs, with the knowledge and express consent of Holstein and the Foreign Office in Berlin.

One evening, shortly before Christmas 1903, while I was dining with my friend Alfred Rothschild, the conversation turned to the disturbing news that had just arrived from the Far East about an escalation of the tension that had long existed between Russia and Japan. Almost all of the guests present, including Lord Rothschild and Leopold Rothschild, as well as other well-known members of London's high finance, declared the possibility of a Russo-Japanese war to be very remote, if not completely excluded. The Duke of Devonshire, however, protested most emphatically against this view, even going so far as to present the outbreak of a Russo-Japanese war, which he believed was imminent, as a historical necessity from Japan's point of view. Leopold Rothschild, who was in the habit of betting walking sticks when views diverged, then offered the Duke a wager, which was stipulated as follows: "I bet against a Russo-Japanese war breaking out within the next five years." The Duke accepted the bet, and the object of the bet was a bamboo cane with an enamel handle. When Leopold Rothschild asked me if I didn't think he would win his bet, I replied that it seemed very doubtful to me whether his fine collection of canes would be enriched in that case.

When I visited Count Hayashi a few days later and told him, among other things, about this bet, he laughed heartily and said that he himself believed he could safely assume that it would not be Leopold Rothschild but the Duke who would win the bet.

As the conversation continued, I learned from Count Hayashi that, due to the continued ill-feeling of Russian diplomacy, Tokyo no longer believed in a peaceful solution and was already preparing for all eventualities. He also mentioned that Russia was still striving to establish new naval bases in the Korean ports of Mokpo and Masampho, between Port Arthur and Vladivostok, which are separated by 1,600 nautical miles. Furthermore, the envoy gave me a brief, concise account of the current balance of power between Russia and Japan in the Far East and expressed the hope that Japan, if it did not wait too long and thereby give Russia the opportunity to complete its armaments, would be victorious in the event of war. Finally, Count Hayashi expressed his personal opinion that the war would probably remain localized, with neither France nor

any other power interfering at the moment and thus England, with its alliance obligations, not becoming involved.

When I confided in Alfred Rothschild about the content of my conversation with Count Hayashi, he asked me to put everything I had told him verbally in writing and send it to him in letter form so that he could dissuade his brothers, Lord Rothschild and Leopold, from their erroneous views about the situation in the Far East.

Here is the text of my letter to Alfred Rothschild, which contains all the details of my conversation with the Japanese ambassador. I would only like to mention that Count Hayashi had given me express permission to communicate his remarks to the Rothschilds in strictest confidence.

Strictly confidential 24 th Dec. 1903

My dear Alfred!

Yesterday I had a long conversation with the Japanese; Minister Viscount Hayashi. The Minister said that in his opinion the Situation in the Far East was extremely grave, and that he did not think a peaceful Solution possible. Japanese Statesmen had known for years that sooner or later a rupture would become inevitable, and had been preparing therefore. Russian Policy had now overreached herself, and he did not think that it was possible for Russia after spending such an enormous amount of money over her far Eastern Policy to withdraw. Russia was anxious to acquire Naval Bases between Port Arthur and Wladivostok owing to the great distance between these places. The only harbours suitable for Naval Bases were Mokpho and Masampho on the Coast of Korea. Without these stations in her hand Russia would never be able to carry out her great aims in the Far East. For the moment she had apparently given up the Intention of acquiring these two stations, but Japan knew that as soon as Russia was strong enough on sea and on land she would at once push her claim for the above stations again. For Japan, on the other hand, it was a vital question that no foreign power should ever have a footing in Korea.

Commercially and strategically, Korea was the domain of Japan. A strong Russian Footing in Manchuria would always be a danger to Japan, as Russia would in time become able to have a go for Korea, not only from Port Arthur and Wladivostok by sea but also by land. It was therefore compulsory for Japan to take measures which would prevent an absolute absorption of Manchuria by Russia. In her last note to the

Russian Government Japan had therefore not only insisted to have a free hand in Korea, but also made certain severe stipulations, about Manchuria which he (the Japanese Minister) did not think Russia would ever accept,

Continuing the Minister discussed the strength of the Naval and Military Forces of Japan and Russia. He said that at the present moment the number of battleships and cruisers were nearly equal, but the Japanese ships, which were nearly all built in England, were most likely better than the Russian men of War. He also thought that the Japanese guns were more modern than the Russian ones, and could therefore be better handled. Russia was building very fast and sending to the Far Fast new ships, and it was known in Tokio, that about the first of May four more new Russian battleships and a fresh Torpedo division would arrive at Port Arthur, therefore it would be a disadvantage to Japan to wait until Russia had increased her naval strength in the Far Fast. Respecting her land forces Russia had according to the knowledge of the Intelligence Department of Tokio, at present between 85 and 90 thousand men in Manchuria, about 20 000 at Port Arthur and less than 10 000 at Wladivostok together, that is to say about, 120 000 in the Far East. The Siberian Railway was in a very bad condition, and it was thought in Tokio, that it would not be easy for Russia to bring up large reinforcements very quickly. Japan had at present over 250 000 well trained soldiers in readiness and in case of need, could easily call out at least another 250 000 Reserves who had gone through the drill of the army. The War would very likely begin with a great Naval Fight somewhere between Chemulpho and Mokpho, besides Japan would very likely land at once a large force in Korea and march on to Manchuria. It was of course impossible for anyone to foretell the result of the great fight, but in Japan people were conscious that it was a fight for existence and every one would fight with zeal, and not shrink from any sacrifice.

To my question, when the war was likely to commence, the Minister said that he would not be surprised at any moment, but most likely before six weeks.

Viscount Hayashi fully agreed with me in the opinion that the war would remain absolutely localized, and that neither France or any other country would assist Russia, so that the possibility that England might get through her Alliance with Japan implicated is quite out of the question.

Believe me my dear Alfred
yours very sincerely

Eckardstein

As mentioned in this letter, during my conversation with Count Hayashi on December 28, 1905, when I asked him when open hostilities between Russia and Japan would likely break out, he replied: "Probably before six weeks have passed." When Japan broke off diplomatic relations with Russia on February 4, 1904, and immediately thereafter, without a prior official declaration of war, Port Arthur was bombarded by a Japanese torpedo flotilla, exactly six weeks had passed since my conversation with the Japanese ambassador on December 23, 1903.

But much was to happen in this short period of time before hostilities finally broke out.

It was a quite strange phenomenon that until the very last moment, almost no one in Europe wanted to believe in the possibility of a Russo-Japanese war, and perhaps least of all Nicholas II and his advisors.

Apart from a very few insiders, only the British Cabinet was truly aware of the situation in Europe. Originally, Downing Street [1)] had attempted to curb its Japanese ally. However, after close contact with influential circles in France, in which King Edward himself played a particularly active role, convinced it that the French government would do everything in its power to avoid being drawn into the conflict by its Russian ally in the event of war, it allowed matters to develop freely. Secretly, it even encouraged its Japanese ally in its intention to give the Russian bear a good run for its money, because in doing so, it ran little or no risk of being called upon to fulfill its alliance obligations. Certainly this policy of England was very clever and skilful. It was Realpolitik in the truest sense of the word, a concept which has never been familiar to the German people and which, unfortunately, they still have no understanding of, even today, although their greatest statesman, Bismarck, was perhaps one of the most brilliant Realpolitikers of all time, at least in foreign affairs.

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1) The Foreign Office in London.

"Even if you know what must be done, you still don't know how it must be done," he once exclaimed to some of his colleagues.

Despite all this, for a time shortly after the outbreak of war in February 1904, it looked as if England would finally be drawn into the war, as Russia, filled with

hatred, issued undisguised threats and perhaps even considered taking action against the British Empire in Central Asia. But once again, the skilful hand of English politics was evident here, as it succeeded in persuading France to act as a mediator and conciliator in St. Petersburg.

At the time, Mr. Delcassé was Foreign Minister in France. When tensions between Russia and Japan began to escalate, he worked feverishly to bring about a compromise between the two powers and prevent the outbreak of hostilities. He also spared no means to intimidate the Japanese. Even the German government, without its own knowledge, was used by French and Russian diplomats as a front in their attempts to intimidate Japan. For example, the Russian ambassador in Tokyo made it clear to the Japanese government that in the event of war, Germany, among others, would officially side with Russia and actively intervene in the war. The Russian minister, Count Lambsdorff, made the same statement to the Japanese ambassador in St. Petersburg. The German representatives in St. Petersburg and Tokyo, however, were unaware of these machinations.

Late in the evening of January 8 (1904), Count Hayashi called me and asked me to see him immediately on an urgent matter. He told me he had received a telegram from his government stating that both the Russian and French sides were continually insinuating in Tokyo that the German government was determined, in the event of war, to actively participate in hostilities against Japan on Russia's side. He asked me to determine whether these statements were true and, if so, to try to counteract them. I replied to the ambassador that I believed I could already tell him with certainty that not a word of them was true. Nevertheless, I would contact the German government about this matter. I immediately reported this to the embassy in London and instructed them to telegraph to Berlin. As I had already suspected, it soon became clear that the whole thing was a lie. A letter from me to Alfred Rothschild dated January 9, 1904, which is printed in the appendix to this volume, deals with this case in full detail.

On January 20 (1904), I introduced Count Hayashi, who had received instructions from his government to establish contact with the London financial elite, to Alfred Rothschild, whom he did not yet know personally. The three of us had a nearly two-hour discussion in which Count Hayashi explained the overall situation in Japan, especially his current financial situation, to Alfred Rothschild.

For the time being, England was reluctant to grant Japan a large loan, so as not to expose itself too openly to Russia and to avoid compromising the neutral

stance the English government had determined to adopt after the outbreak of war. However, Alfred Rothschild assured Count Hayashi of his sympathy for the Japanese cause and made it clear to him that the Japanese government could be assured of the support of the House of Rothschild on future occasions. As far as I know, however, the House of Rothschild never subsequently issued a Japanese bond in England itself, but left these transactions to another well-known financial house in London, which had already had business relations with the Japanese government for years.

Since people in Berlin absolutely refused to believe the possibility of an imminent Russo-Japanese war, I went there for a short time around mid-January to gather information.

When I appeared at the Foreign Office and predicted with absolute certainty the imminent outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Japan, almost none of the leading figures believed me. When I telegraphed Count Hayashi in London to inquire whether there was any important news, I received the following coded telegram from him: Unless Russia recognizes Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria, it was certainly [1)]. When the responsible advisor for the Far East, Privy Councillor Klehmet, presented this telegram addressed to me to Holstein, with whom I was no longer on good terms at the time, he replied that it was all nonsense; it was naive to believe that Russia would ever recognize Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria, but even more naive to believe that Japan would ever declare war on Russia. The only person in the political department of the Foreign Office who absolutely shared my views and predicted with absolute certainty the imminent outbreak of war in the Far East was the then Advisory Councillor Dr. Friedrich Rosen, who is today our Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs.

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1) If Russia does not recognize Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria, war a certainty.

Before I returned to London, I wrote a long memorandum (on January 17) for Imperial Chancellor Count Bülow, in which I drew on all the material at my disposal to substantiate my conviction of the imminent outbreak of war. Since I had heard that the Kaiser personally was already engaged in lively discussions with Nicholas II about the issues of the Far East and the possibilities of war, I emphasized in this memorandum that we must maintain a free hand in the event of war and not unnecessarily commit ourselves to any one side.

After my return to London, I received the following letter from Prince Lichnowsky, who was then Senior Counsellor in the Foreign Office and was very close to Prince Bülow:

Berlin, January 25, 1904

Dear Eckardstein!

I am pleased to inform you that the Reich Chancellor has commissioned me to convey his appreciation and thanks for the excellent note you left here before your departure. You have thus once again demonstrated your precise command of the relevant issues and your ability to assess the political situation.

I would like to add a request to the transmission of this commission. It has recently come to our attention that Reuter is concerned with alleged German mediation proposals and corresponding negative hints from Japan; reports have also come in from Tokyo about distrustful sentiments toward us in influential circles there. Under these circumstances, it seems doubly necessary to anxiously avoid anything that might in any way suggest that we are trying to force our way forward or even provoke Japan into war. You have aptly stated that the best policy lies in the greatest restraint on our part. The Foreign Office and our foreign missions have always acted according to this principle.

It is urgently necessary to refrain from anything that could be exploited by the British or others to our disadvantage, especially as agitation. Perhaps you can occasionally emphasize in clubs or societies that, according to your knowledge of the circumstances, Germany is keen to see peace maintained for economic reasons alone, but will continue to refrain from any interference in view of the reluctance of both parties to allow mediation to take place, and because we lack any means of securing its implementation.

With warm greetings,
Lichnowsky

Reading today the letters from Wilhelm II to Niki dated December 4, 1903, January 9, 1904, and February 11, 1904, published by the Bolsheviks a year ago, one can understand why Russian diplomacy felt justified in playing Germany off against Japan in Tokyo before the outbreak of war, as I explained earlier. It was also no wonder that the numerous letters and the official stance of Wilhelm II and his advisors during the Russo-Japanese War helped to weld England and France

together. Ultimately, "the traditional friendship between the Romanov and Hohenzollern dynasties" was confirmed by the fact that Nicholas II, after Wilhelm II and German diplomacy had allowed themselves to be exploited by Russia during the war, gave Germany the boot and sided with England and France not only in Algeciras, but across the board.

On the afternoon of February 4, 1904, Count Hayashi informed me confidentially that the Japanese envoy in Petersburg, Kurino, had been instructed to collect his passports from the Russian government and to leave, and that the outbreak of war was thus sealed. I immediately sent a short telegram to Mr. Paul von Schwabach, the head of the Bleichröder House *) in Berlin, which he presented to the Foreign Office on February 5 in the morning. I also informed the embassy in London of the outbreak of war, which also telegraphed to Berlin. But people in Wilhelmstrasse were still sleeping the sleep of the just and did not believe this important news.

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*) The banking house of Bleichröder which acted as a branch office in Berlin of the Rothschilds' bank.

However, the German ambassador in St. Petersburg, Count Alvensleben, had shortly before telegraphed to Berlin that war was out of the question, as the Tsar did not want war. Prince Radolin had also just reported from Paris that the French government did not believe that war was imminent.

Therefore, there was considerable astonishment in Wilhelmstrasse when the official news arrived shortly thereafter that a Japanese torpedo flotilla was already bombarding Port Arthur.

Great bitterness against the government arose in Berlin's business and financial world, as it had continued to be spread, both officially and unofficially, until the last moment that the outbreak of a Russo-Japanese war was out of the question.

The appendix to this volume contains, among other things, a correspondence between myself, Armand Lévy, and Wilhelm Betzold. I have already described these two close friends in detail in Volume 1 of my memoirs. Monsieur Guillaume, or rather little Wilhelm Betzold, came from Dessau. As a young man, he was employed by the Viennese Rothschilds; later, he joined the Parisian Rothschilds, where he acquired a position of great trust. During the war of

1870/71, he served as financial advisor to Bismarck's staff, along with the elderly Bleichröder. After 1870, he lived as an independent financier in Paris. He had excellent business and political connections throughout the world. Among his great patrons were the Imperial Chancellor Prince Clodwig Hohenlohe, the elderly Prince Münster, who served for many years as ambassador to London and Paris, and Field Marshal Count Waldersee. He also had close ties to Holstein and Prince Radolin, Prince Münster's successor in Paris.

Betzold died in 1906 while visiting Berlin.

Armand Lévy was a Parisian financier who maintained close relationships with most of France's leading politicians. His closest friends included Minister Maurice Rouvier and Gaston Calmette, the well-known long-time editor of Le Figaro, who was shot by Madame Caillaux in March 1914. Armand Lévy was the type of witty Parisian boulevardier of the old school and was universally popular for his good nature and pleasant personality.

Chapter III.

As I described in detail in Volume 2 of my memoirs, an Anglo-French rapprochement began almost immediately after the failure of the German-English, or rather, German-Anglo-Japanese, alliance negotiations of 1901, for which the leading government circles in Germany bore the blame. This initially manifested itself in academic discussions between English and French statesmen about a friendly settlement of all the pending, still unresolved colonial issues of both powers. I have also already recounted how Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain and the French Ambassador Mr. Cambon entered into an exchange of views on a possible colonial settlement at the beginning of 1902. But all these negotiations led to no tangible result, nor did the discussions on the matter that developed between Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Cambon towards the end of 1902. At that time, England was not yet willing to make agreements with France regarding the northern coast of Morocco, which would have threatened its position in the Mediterranean, especially its main base at Gibraltar. Around the time of King Edward's first official visit to Paris in May 1903, Anglo-French negotiations for a settlement of all pending colonial issues, especially the Egyptian and Moroccan questions, were taking firmer shape. But England still hesitated to weaken its strategic position in the Mediterranean by making agreements with France regarding the coast opposite Gibraltar. This far-reaching question only really got underway after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in February 1904, as both England and France were now firmly determined to prevent the danger of becoming involved in the East Asian conflict by amicably settling all the differences between them on colonial issues.

As early as March 9 (1904), I learned from a well-known member of the then British Cabinet that a far-reaching Anglo-French treaty, which also included Egypt and Morocco, has been successfully achieved and already signed. As the Minister expressed it to me, the world, and especially Russia, would be astonished to one day learn of certain very recent agreements between France and England, which, among other things, also concerned Egypt and Morocco. It was very gratifying that Anglo-French relations were developing so intimately, and Russia would probably have little luck with her threat of a large demonstration of troops in Central Asia.

This conversation of mine on March 9, 1904, with a British Cabinet member is recorded in a coded telegram to Paul von Schwabach dated March 10, which is reprinted in the appendix to this volume.

When Paul von Schwabach informed the Foreign Office of my report that a colonial treaty had been concluded between England and France, which also settled the Egyptian and Moroccan question, this news was not believed. Completely unaware of what was really going on in the world, Wilhelm II and his advisors continued to follow his alleged friend Niki and, by ostentatiously taking sides with Russia without receiving the slightest consideration in return, to make both England and France suspicious and mistrustful and to weld these two powers together even more closely.

The definitive conclusion of the Anglo-French colonial agreement did not take place until April 8 (1Q04). However, on March 23, [1)], Mr. Delcassé officially brought the contents of this agreement to the attention of the German government, both in a confidential conversation with the German ambassador in Paris, Prince Radolin, and through a report of this conversation sent to the French ambassador in Berlin, Bihourd, for oral use in the Foreign Office. However, these official oral communications were ignored by the German government. Only at the beginning of the Moroccan crisis in 1905 did Berlin suddenly return to this matter, after the Anglo-French treaty had already been in full force for a whole year, and subsequently a Franco-Spanish agreement (published on October 5, 1904) on the partition of Morocco had been concluded.

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1) 14 days after my telegram to Schwabach for notification to the Foreign Office.

Although the war was already in full swing with the successful attack by a Japanese torpedo flotilla on the warships anchored in Port Arthur and the blockade of Port Arthur by Admiral Togo's fleet, which began on February 10, Mr. Delcassé continued to attempt to bring about a compromise to settle the conflict. The Russian representatives in Paris and London had also received instructions to try to persuade the British and French governments to bring a halt to the hostilities, which had broken out too quickly and unexpectedly for Russia, by adopting a forceful stance against Japan. Naturally, all such naive attempts were unsuccessful.

In Japan, the outbreak of war had sparked great patriotism, while in Russia, which was far from finished with its armaments, it only went into battle under

duress and reluctance. The Japanese quickly forced their way across the Sino-Korean border river, the Yalu, took control of the northern part of the Liautung Peninsula, and cut off Port Arthur, which was soon besieged by General Nogi. All attempts by the Russian fleet to break the Japanese blockade were in vain; so were the Russians' desperate efforts to relieve Port Arthur. After a twelve-day battle at Liaoyang, the Russians were forced to abandon their positions and withdraw to Mukden.

Even though, in the midst of these tremendous military successes of Japan, the official slogan in Petersburg was that peace was out of the question until the Japanese had been crushed across the board, a small clique, who saw the spectre of revolution approaching with giant steps, began to see reason. This coterie, which, due to the Tsar's state of mind under the influence of the politically indiscriminate, blind, and fanatically misguided Military Party, dared not even to whisper the word "peace," secretly included two influential men, Count Witte *) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Lambsdorff. Both had opposed the war, both had worked to avoid an open conflict altogether, if possible, or at least to delay the outbreak of hostilities until Russian armaments were completed; but both had been defeated in their peaceful efforts by the Grand Duke and Military Party, possessed by megalomania and brutal greed.

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*) Sergei Witte: Russian Minister of Finance up to 1903. Appointed in August 1903 as chairman of the Committee of Ministers up until October 1905.

Quite timidly, this coterie, which also included well-known major industrialists and financiers, began in July (1904) to put out feelers in London and Paris through their personal contacts there, first of all to determine on what basis Japan might be willing would be to enter into peace negotiations.

One day, during the July races in Newmarket, I was approached by a person from Paris I had known for many years, who was very closely related to the old Baron Alphonse Rothschild and thus to the entire House of Rothschild. He asked me whether I might be willing to sound out Count Hayashi, the Japanese ambassador in London who was a friend of mine, as to the basis on which Japan might agree to enter into peace negotiations. They were willing and able in Paris to arrange a top-secret meeting between him, Count Hayashi, and Count Witte, who was currently in France, at some neutral location, be it Brussels, Ostend, or elsewhere.

I replied that I could not possibly approach Count Hayashi with such a mission, as that might give the impression that I had been commissioned by the Russian side to conduct this sounding. This might possibly make the Japanese ambassador suspicious.

After much deliberation, the following modus procedendi was finally agreed upon: "First, a letter should be addressed to Count Hayashi by some reasonably well-known figure in Parisian financial circles, containing a sounding along the lines mentioned. Since Count Hayashi usually consults me in such cases, he would probably inform me this time as well of the step taken in his case, and everything else would then work itself out."

About ten days later, I received a short letter from Count Hayashi, in which he asked me when I intended to come to the city again, as he would like to speak with me. I was in the countryside not far from London at the time. When I went to see the envoy, he asked me to publish corrections in some of my close friends' continental papers about certain false news concerning Japan which had been circulated by the daily press. After I had explained that I was happy to comply with his request and would take care of the matter immediately, the conversation turned to a recent article in the press about supposedly imminent peace negotiations, which were to begin soon at the joint instigation of the English and French governments. Count Hayashi remarked that he had no official knowledge of the matter. Nor did he believe that Russia, which was at present on no good terms with its French ally, nor with England, would accept the official mediation of these two powers for the purpose of bringing about peace negotiations. When I agreed with the envoy in this, and remarked that I had not long ago learned from a well-known personage of Parisian high finance that Count Witte, who was at present in France, might inclined to have a direct and quite secret discussion with him, the envoy, about a possible basis for peace negotiations at some neutral place, such as Brussels, I replied that I would be glad to have a direct and quite secret discussion with him. Count Hayashi replied that he had only recently received a letter from Paris to the same effect, but that he was generally very sceptical about such letters.

Since the outbreak of war, he had received a multitude of similar letters, which he had not attached any particular importance to and therefore left unanswered. He then dug this letter out from among several papers lying on his desk, told me the author's name, and asked me if I knew this person. When I replied that it was a highly respected and widely known figure in Parisian financial circles, someone who could certainly be taken seriously, the ambassador

suddenly became very thoughtful. After some thought, he said the following: "It would certainly be a mistake to let such an opportunity pass. This matter is, of course, extremely delicate, but I will nevertheless contact my government and ask for instructions. Perhaps you would be so kind as to take charge of the matter further, if necessary."

I replied to the ambassador that I would, of course, be happy to assist him in this matter as well, if necessary.

Shortly thereafter, I received a letter from Count Hayashi informing me that he had received authorization from his government to meet with Count Witte at a neutral location and attempt to agree on a basis for possible peace negotiations. When I visited him shortly thereafter, he asked me to accompany him, if necessary, to act as mediator between him and Count Witte.

I then telegraphed my friends in Paris, and the very next day a secret agent of Count Witte arrived from Paris. He immediately sought me out and discussed the matter with me from his employer's perspective. I was expressly requested not to disclose anything about it, even to the official Russian representation in London, as the matter was too delicate due to the state of mind in which the Tsar found himself under the influence of the Grand Duke and the military party. Unfortunately, I had already discussed the matter academically with Count Witte's official representative in London, which, as a letter to me from Prince Bülow dated September 2, 1904 reveals, gave rise to gossip in diplomatic circles in St. Petersburg that I was involved in attempts to mediate peace. On this occasion, I gained insight into Russia's strange, Napoleonic-style secret agent organization, which was organized in such a way that most agents knew nothing of each other. I was told that at times even the official Russian foreign missions were observed and controlled from St. Petersburg by such secret agents.

As I now authentically learned, the former British ambassador in Vienna, Sir Horace Rumbold, had recently announced, apparently at the instigation of the British government in St. Petersburg, that any Japanese peace conditions would likely consist of the following points:

1. Absolute freedom for Japan in Korea. 2. Return of Port Arthur to China. 3. The Manchurian Railway is to be placed under international control. 4. Payment of an indemnity to Japan.

In St. Petersburg, it was assumed that these were the conditions England desired. I was then asked to sound out Count Hayashi as to whether and to what extent the above-mentioned points applied. The ambassador, whom I then questioned in the aforementioned sense, replied that his government had not yet made any conclusive decisions about the conditions to be imposed. His instructions were that, in the event of a meeting with Count Witte, "they should first determine through a purely personal exchange of views whether it would be possible to create a basis for possible peace negotiations that would be acceptable to both parties under the circumstances."

In the course of these discussions, in which I played the role of mediator, it became clear that both parties were seriously determined, if possible, to reach a basis for possible peace negotiations, without the good offices of any neutral government: "Sans les bonnes offices d'un autre gouvernement, quel qu'il soit" (Without the good offices of any other government), as Count Witte expressed himself in a telegram to his agent.

This was precisely the point that concerned me most in Germany's interest. At this time, I was suffering more than ever from the "cauchemar des coalitions." As if in a panorama, I saw how the entire world situation was developing almost daily more and more to Germany's disadvantage. Given the erroneous and wavering policies of Wilhelm II and his advisors, it was not difficult to foresee that the ring of our enemies would one day close, and that catastrophe would befall us. Naturally, therefore, I wanted to avoid, if possible, anything that could accelerate the encirclement of Germany.

I concluded a long letter to Prince Bülow in August (1Q04), in which I informed him in broad outline of the events described above regarding the question of a Russo-Japanese peace agreement, with the following sentence:

"As far as we are concerned, in my humble opinion, nothing could be more undesirable than if peace were one day to be achieved through Anglo-French mediation. This would not only create a new link between England and France, but possibly also the basis for a compromise between England and Russia on all Asian issues. That such a compromise would be extremely popular here in England, not only in influential circles but also among the people, despite the recent war contraband and shipping controversies, I have no doubt at all. Therefore, if peace negotiations should take place sooner or later, it would probably be in our interest if peace between Russia and Japan were achieved

through direct negotiations between the two powers and without the mediation of other governments."

In response to my letter, I first received a short telegram from Prince Bülow from Norderney dated August 28th, with the following content:

"Letter received with thanks, discretion, of course.

Best regards,

Bülow."

A few days later, I received a letter from the Prince. Here is the text:

Berlin, September 2, 1904

Dear Baron Eckardstein!

Completely confidential.

You will have received my telegram from Norderney. I would like to reiterate, however, that I have read your communication with keen interest. You can be assured of my complete discretion. In particular, in accordance with your express wish, I will not forward any of your information to our embassy in London. Conversely, I also ask you not to let anyone know that you have informed me of the matter. It will be of great value to me if you continue to keep me personally informed, by writing directly to me, about the Pourparlers in question and their developments. In doing so, I would like to draw your attention to the following aspects.

You are quite right that it is better if peace, if it comes about, is agreed directly between Russia and Japan, and not through Franco-English mediation, since such mediation could contain the essence of an Anglo-French-Russian entente, which we naturally do not desire. But the German side must not work too diligently to accelerate a direct peace agreement, lest we again be blamed, either by one side or the other, for what each side subsequently finds objectionable about the peace agreement. That there will be no lack of material for such subsequent recriminations is easy to foresee. Undoubtedly, the existence of the Russian dynasty would be endangered if Russia, despite the solemn assurances of its government and the Tsar himself, were to conclude peace so soon after Russian defeats. On the other hand, public opinion in Japan may perhaps be more inclined toward a peace acceptable to Russia once the war has lasted a little

longer. All in all, I would like to believe that it is better for the cause itself and for all involved if the German side, at least in the current situation, does not show too much zeal for bringing about peace. To achieve a lasting peace, things still need to mature somewhat. In St. Petersburg diplomatic circles, it is already rumoured that you are involved in attempts to mediate peace. It will inevitably be sought that the German government's support is behind you. This could have the very consequence, which you and I do not want, of spurring the Anglo-French desire for mediation to even greater activity.

In view of this, and in consideration of the reserve imposed on us by the overall situation, I would advise you to attend to the negotiations only to the extent necessary for the continuous information I requested at the beginning of my letter, but to avoid any prominence on your part and, if possible, to let no one notice your interest in the matter. I am certain that, with your oft-proven political skill and proven devotion to German interests, you will succeed in keeping the further course of the negotiations in question under review, without exposing yourself and us, and without initiating the negotiations.

With thanks again for your communication and best regards, I am

Your sincere devotee,

Bülow

At the time this correspondence between Prince Bülow and me took place, the secret discussions aimed at arranging a meeting between Count Hayashi and Count Witte to initiate peace negotiations had almost completely stalled, for the Russian Minister of the Interior, Konstantinovitch von Plehwe, had fallen victim to a bomb attack by the revolutionaries on July 28 (1904), and Count Witte had been forced to return to Petersburg as quickly as possible. Due to the rapid further development of the revolutionary movement in Russia, the proposed peace talks ultimately fizzled out. It was admirable that the Japanese, although already extremely weakened in every respect, held out militarily, economically, and financially in the fight against the Russian colossus for a full year and emerged victorious from the world-historic 15-day Battle of Mukden in February and March 1905 against overwhelming odds. Ultimately, the two warring powers agreed to the mediation proposals of a neutral, albeit non-European, government, and on September 5, 1905, under the aegis of President Roosevelt, the Treaty of

Portsmouth (New Hampshire) was concluded, from which Japan emerged as the dominant power in East Asia.

But Wilhelm II and German diplomacy, blinded by their own insanity, continued to pursue the phantom of an alliance with Russia, until the attitude of Russian diplomacy at the Algeciras Conference finally brought this hyper-illusion to an abrupt end.

In February 1905, approximately seven months after the above-described attempts to initiate peace negotiations between Russia and Japan, a representative of the Paris newspaper "Matin" contacted Count Hayashi and requested an interview. He was received by the ambassador, and during the course of the conversation, the conversation turned to possible prospects for peace. In this context, Count Hayashi also briefly mentioned the well-known feelers from July of the previous year. A few days later, a long, sensational article appeared in the Matin, in which it was implied, among other things, that Count Witte had already attempted to initiate peace negotiations in July 1904, but that Japan had wanted nothing to do with it. This entirely inaccurate and exaggerated report made the rounds throughout the world's press, and Count Witte therefore issued a denial, stating that he had never considered entering into peace negotiations with Japan. Certainly, no one who knew the delicate situation Count Witte was in at the time could blame him for this action, for his political enemies in Petersburg were trying to use this affair to snare him and prevent him from exploiting the influence he had only recently regained with great difficulty. This incident was equally unpleasant for Count Hayashi, as his political opponents in Tokyo also attempted to use it to create difficulties for him. Very soon, however, the affair fell silent, and nothing more was heard of it.

Chapter IV.

In June 1904, King Edward made his first official visit to Germany since his accession to the throne in January 1901. He did not come to Berlin, however, but instead appeared on his yacht, the "Victoria and Albert," accompanied by several warships, for the regattas in Kiel.

At that time, I was cruising the Baltic Sea in my sailing yacht from England and spent a few days in Kiel during the King's presence.

King Edward engaged me in a long conversation during afternoon tea aboard the "Hohenzollern" and, as always, was extremely gracious. The Emperor, in contrast, treated me very briefly and reservedly that afternoon. As the King walked down the landing steps and saw me standing there, he suddenly turned to me and said in a very friendly tone: "If we should not speak to each other again here in Kiel, please remind me at the next opportunity, when I see you after your return to England, that I have something to confide in you."

When I met the King shortly afterwards at the races in Goodwood, I hinted to him that he had wanted to say something to me in Kiel. He immediately remembered what it was all about and said the following: "As I gathered from the Kaiser's statements in Kiel, the Foreign Office in Berlin seems to have been very active in agitating against you recently. The embassy in London, in particular, also seems to be plotting against you. That doesn't surprise me at all, because you are extremely annoying to these people, since you are usually better informed, and they naturally don't like being controlled by your messages to Berlin. Moreover, the Kaiser also told me that you were the only one who was well informed about the outbreak of war in the Far East and many other things. Regarding our (England's) colonial treaty with France from April of this year, I was pleased to hear from the Kaiser that he also fully agrees with our agreements regarding Morocco, because, as he said, Morocco never interested him and does not interest him today. Unfortunately, I have also discovered that the Kaiser is completely misguided about many, and indeed the most important, matters. I have the impression that he's being kept in the dark about a great many things and even deliberately misinformed. Where the people who support the Kaiser in his naval policy, which, despite all his denials, is actually directed against us, are ultimately trying to get away with is a mystery to me."

It should be emphasized here again that at the end of June 1904, almost three months after the definitive conclusion and announcement of the Anglo-French colonial agreement, under which, among other things, England granted France a free hand in Morocco, the Kaiser declared his complete agreement to King Edward.

In fact, it is not the Kaiser who can be blamed for this hopeless Morocco policy of 1905 and 1911, which was so catastrophic for Germany's future. In this respect, he is naturally complicit in allowing his responsible advisors, albeit reluctantly, to ultimately implement such a foolish, even suicidal, policy. Prince Bülow was responsible for the disastrous Morocco campaign of 1905, which led to the massive diplomatic setback at Algeciras, although Holstein was the driving force behind it. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg was responsible for the outrageous and ridiculous Panther Leap to Agadir in 1911, which at that time had already almost drawn Germany into a war with almost the entire world, although State Secretary Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter must be considered the actual originator of this showpiece, so ominous for the future. Both actions were extremely popular at the time, even in Germany, among a large portion of the undiscerning public, and the Press Department of the Foreign Office succeeded almost effortlessly in framing these two disastrous defeats of German diplomacy at home, which were mocked by the entire world, as great statesmanlike successes.

One is involuntarily reminded of a saying by Bismarck, which roughly reads: "If a political measure I planned was popular with public opinion, I had to think twice and three times over whether I was on the right path."

Before I move on to a description of the Moroccan crisis of 1805, it is worthwhile to briefly review the origins and prehistory of the Moroccan question.

In 1880, after lengthy negotiations, representatives of the European states signed a convention in Madrid that constituted a general international settlement of affairs in the Sherif Empire, but especially of the economic interests of the individual powers.

When France laid the foundations for its great African colonial empire at the beginning of the 19th century, which would eventually extend from Algiers down to Timbuktu and Dahomey, and from Senegal to Lake Chad and the Congo, it already envisioned the acquisition of Morocco as the completion of its great

project. To compensate for the loss of its position in Egypt, France, at Bismarck's persuasion, established itself in Tunis in 1881. When Jules Ferry, with whom Bismarck was on very friendly terms, took over as head of the French government in 1883, a thorough exchange of views on the future of Morocco took place between him and the German Chancellor, mainly through private channels, such as the mediation of Prince Henckel von Donnersmarck. Bismarck finally agreed that France could declare a protectorate over Morocco whenever it deemed the moment appropriate. He even offered France his moral and diplomatic support for this purpose.

Count Paul Hatzfeldt told me that in the mid-1980s, when he (Hatzfeldt) was State Secretary of the Foreign Office, Bismarck once said to him: "Besides the Balkans, there are three great hornets' nests on our planet: the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the American Monroe Doctrine. God grant that Germany may never plant itself in one of these dangerous nests."

Indeed, Bismarck never saw the Mediterranean as a political end in itself for German policy, but merely as a means of regulating relations with the states interested there according to Germany's international needs.

When the Sturm und Drang period of German colonial policy began in the 1890s, and at the instigation of the many uncritical naval and colonial fantasists, this haphazard, boundless, and disproportionate expansion policy began, which is largely to blame for the terrible fate that has befallen the German Empire, the wise Count Paul Hatzfeldt, whom Bismarck famously described as the best horse in his diplomatic stable, raised his warning voice in Berlin. He emphasized that one could only venture into such a corner of the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf without endangering the existence of the Empire in cooperation and with the backing of England, but never in opposition to England. Unfortunately, his warnings were ignored, and the adventurous Baghdad and Morocco policies simultaneously placed Germany in the danger zone of the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. As I explained in the second volume of my memoirs, it was repeatedly possible to reach agreement with England on both the Baghdad and Morocco issues and to reach a joint solution to these two problems on a completely equal basis; but in its boundless lack of foresight and decisiveness, German diplomacy each time let the opportunities that presented themselves pass by unexploited.

It is known that an Anglo-German treaty on the Baghdad project, concluded between Prince Lichnowsky and Sir Edward Grey and entirely in line with

Germany's interests, was ready for signature in the spring of 1914. Although Mr. von Bethmann Hollweg wanted to sign, a personality who, like Holstein at the time, had seized leadership in the Foreign Office, a polygamist, a copy of Holstein, who, while far from possessing his abilities, managed to assert his position through tenacity and played a significant role in Germany's great catastrophe, succeeded in thwarting the signing of the treaty through continued intrigue. Only on July 27, 1914, four days before Germany's declaration of war on Russia, was the Foreign Office suddenly willing to sign the treaty, but England, of course, said "no."

As for the Moroccan problem, Lord Salisbury essentially possessed roughly the same ideas from the English perspective as Bismarck had pursued from the German perspective. When I once brought the conversation to the Moroccan question with him in the early 1990s, he replied with a smile: "We better let sleeping dogs lie." [1)] From his expression, it wasn't difficult to guess his true thoughts. These undoubtedly suggested that, in the worst case scenario, he intended to throw Morocco into the balance as a countervailing factor in a possible conflict with France over the Egyptian question. Count Hatzfeldt, to whom I reported my conversation with Lord Salisbury, had exactly the same understanding of his thoughts and reported to Berlin along these lines.

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1) We prefer to let sleeping dogs lie.

Nevertheless, during the negotiations between Colonial Secretary Chamberlain and me in 1899 and 1901 on a German-English solution to the Moroccan question, Lord Salisbury fully agreed to the stipulations of the proposed Anglo-German treaty.

But what did German policy towards Morocco consist of during the Wilhelminian era? What did they want? What goals did they strive for? The answer to this can only be that they pursued no definite goals, had no idea what they wanted, and haphazardly and thoughtlessly stirred up the hornet's nest of the Mediterranean. They repeatedly missed brilliant opportunities to reach an agreement with England on the Moroccan question, as well as the opportunities that arose to engage in friendly negotiations with France on this issue. On the other hand, things were senselessly pushed to the Algeciras Conference in order to have Germany's isolation officially confirmed, to complete the encirclement process directed against Germany, and thereby create a situation whose inevitable consequence was World War I.

With King Edward's visit to Kiel in June 1904, Anglo-German relations had at least outwardly improved somewhat. By the autumn of the same year, however, relations between the two powers had once again become so strained as a result of Germany's clumsy policy that at times even a sudden outbreak of open hostilities was to be feared.

When in October 1904 the newly equipped Russian Baltic Fleet, which consisted in no small part of old steamers of the Hamburg-America Line and the North German Lloyd, passed through the English Channel on its way to East Asia, where it was to be destroyed by the Japanese near the island of Tsushima on May 27, 1905, the well-known incident took place near the Dogger Bank, in which a number of English fishing vessels were bombed and sunk by the Russians. The commanding admiral of the Russian fleet, my friend Roshestvensky, 1 with whom I had shared many a glass of wine and a few spirits in London military clubs in earlier days, had, on his expedition to the theatre of war, which he had arranged with great difficulty, gotten into the habit of seeing Japanese torpedo boats after dinner instead of white mice, and in places where, for purely technical reasons, they could not possibly be. After the Russian fleet sank a number of innocent fishing boats on the Dogger Bank, public opinion and government circles in England were initially seized by a great deal of irritation against Russia. But it wasn't long before the agitation against Russian policy provoked by the aforementioned incident gave way to a deep antipathy toward Germany, escalating into hostility. Through his exuberant, open support for Russia, as well as his support for the Russian naval expedition to Japanese waters, which far exceeded the bounds of benevolent neutrality, Wilhelm II had managed, without receiving the slightest compensation from Russia, to arouse the doubts of England and Japan to such an extent that London was already considering measures to prevent a possible surprise from sinister plans allegedly hatched in Berlin for the German fleet to intervene in Russia's favour.

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1) Admiral Roshestvensky had been naval attaché at the Russian embassy in London for many years and later visited London several times.

For those who were able to look behind the scenes, there is no doubt that the profound mistrust of the alleged intentions of German policy that arose again in England at that time was also due in large part to secret Russian machinations.

This mood of suspicion against German interventionist tendencies on behalf of Russia increasingly spread in England and reached its peak in the spring of 1905 when the Moroccan crisis, suddenly provoked by German diplomacy, occurred.

The thanks of Nicholas II and Russian diplomacy for Germany's effusive support during the Japanese War, however, consisted in Russia's siding with Germany's enemies shortly thereafter in Algeciras, not only ad hoc but also for the future, thus closing the ring of encirclement.

Chapter V.

Soon after the conclusion of the Franco-British colonial treaty of April 8, 1904, France began to establish itself in Morocco. Since the German government had not lodged a protest against this treaty, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Delcassé, believed he was entitled to begin the long-planned political and economic reforms in the Sherifian Empire.

However, in March 1905, at Holstein's instigation, a protest movement against the French actions in Morocco suddenly arose in Berlin government circles. The great Battle of Mukden had been fought, in which Russia was defeated by the Japanese, and the revolution in the Russian Empire also contributed to further weakening the Tsarist Empire, which had already been severely devastated by the war in the Far East, and to paralyzing it militarily for a considerable time. Mr. Sasonov who was then Counselor at the Embassy in London, and his wife had spent Christmas with me in the countryside in England. On this occasion, we had lengthy historical-philosophical discussions, which I look back on today with great interest, after the tremendous, world-shaking events of recent years.

Mr. Sazonov, who possessed extensive knowledge, particularly in the fields of history and literature, was an extremely pleasant companion and witty chatterer, from whom one could learn a great deal. Among other things, we had long conversations about the famous correspondence between Catherine II and Melchior von Grimm, about Tolstoy, and most of the Russian classics.

Mr. Sazonov commented on the situation in Russia at that time as follows: "The first great catastrophe that the Russian Empire had to endure was in the 17th century during the reign of False Demetrius, the second at the beginning of the 19th century during the Napoleonic Wars, and the third we are now experiencing in the form of the disastrous war with Japan and the revolution that developed from it. But we will survive this catastrophe as well, learn the necessary lessons from it, and ultimately emerge from all our misfortunes stronger than ever."

Who could have foreseen back then that exactly ten years later, when Mr. Sazonov was Foreign Minister in St. Petersburg, the greatest world catastrophe ever would break out, affecting Russia more than any other country?

Another statement that Mr. Sazonov made to me back in 1904 also seems particularly remarkable today. He stated the following: "The Russian government will always be in a position to retain the decision for war or peace. Should, however, the case ever arise that a Russian daughter nation in the Balkans belonging to the Orthodox Church is invaded and violated by another power, no government in Russia, even if it wanted to, would be strong enough to prevent Russian military intervention. In such a case, the waves of Orthodox and Pan-Slavic excitement would assume such dimensions that no state leadership would be able to withstand them."

To return, after this digression, to the actual topic of this chapter, namely the Moroccan crisis of the spring of 1905, I would like to emphasize that the idea of using Russia's temporary military impotence to finally settle accounts with France initially originated solely in Holstein's mind. Unfortunately, he succeeded to win the Reich Chancellor, as well as several high-ranking military officers and well-known publicists, for example the political fantasist Professor Theodor Schiemann, to his ideas. However, the one who resisted this foolish and, for the future, so disastrous plan most decisively was the Kaiser. Both Holstein and the Chancellor had probably begun to realize that they had completely miscalculated with their diplomatic methods and that their aimless wavering was increasingly leading to the complete isolation of Germany. As a result, they hoped to destroy the encirclement process of Germany through a preventive war against France. But this calculation, too, was fundamentally wrong, as I will demonstrate in the course of this chapter.

With great effort and difficulty, Holstein and Prince Bülow finally succeeded in persuading the Kaiser to embark on the more than foolish and adventurous journey to Tangier, which at that time had already come within a whisker of unleashing a world war. On his journey to Tangier, the Kaiser paid a visit to the King and Queen of Portugal in Lisbon. As he left the Portuguese capital on his yacht, the "Hohenzollern," he expressed his great displeasure to some of his entourage about Prince Bülow's continued insistence that the planned landing in Tangier actually go ahead, saying that he could not understand the purpose of this anti-French demonstration, which seemed extremely daring to him. But why did he finally allow himself to be persuaded, against his will, to take this step, so disastrous for the future of the German Empire? Hadn't he often enough exercised his imperial veto over other proposed political measures that were perhaps quite sensible? Here, in this case, where he possessed the entirely correct instinct for the futility and danger of such an adventurous undertaking, why did his otherwise pronounced stubbornness suddenly fail?

With an anxious heart and forebodings, I had followed the Imperial journey to Tangier and the Moroccan crisis, which was becoming increasingly acute, when I suddenly received a telephone call from Paris in London late in the afternoon of May 3, 1905. It was my friend Armand Lévy, who telephoned me on behalf of Prime Minister Rouvier, telling me that I was urgently requested to leave for Paris immediately, if possible that same evening, as the Minister wanted to discuss the extremely tense situation with me the following morning and intended to ask me to intervene immediately in the interest of a peaceful solution to the Moroccan affair. Shortly afterwards, I also received a telephone call from two mutual friends of Armand Lévy and myself, Messrs. Caesar Schlesinger and Fran Deutsch, as Armand Lévy had telegraphed them to persuade me to leave for Paris immediately. Although in many ways it was not at all convenient for me to leave London at that very moment, I left immediately for Paris, where I arrived early the next morning and went to Armand Lévy's apartment in the Boulevard des Capucines, as I had been invited to stay with him.

Immediately after my arrival, Armand Lévy telephoned Prime Minister Rouvier, informed him of my arrival, and arranged that he would be with me at his private villa in Neuilly in an hour. As we were about to board the car, our mutual friend Gaston Calmette, the long-time director of Le Figaro, suddenly appeared and accompanied us to Rouvier's villa. He was in a state of great agitation and told us that the latest news from Berlin and the border was extremely worrying. He then launched into a fierce denunciation of Mr. Delcassé, who, like Baron Holstein, wanted war and, although the Prime Minister had taken the portfolio of Foreign Affairs from him and taken over the administration of this position himself, continued his warmongering. If it had been up to Mr. Delcassé, Gaston Calmette believed, the war would have broken out long ago; because he wanted to send a French fleet to Tangier to prevent the Emperor from landing.

Prime Minister Rouvier first thanked me warmly for having responded to his spontaneous request to come to Paris immediately. Then he said the following: "Now we will not abandon diplomacy, we will abandon the common sense." [1)] He himself, he continued, as well as his most influential colleagues in the current cabinet, such as Etienne and Clementelle, were students of Jules Ferry. [2)] Like his master, he too had always strove to establish and maintain the most friendly relations possible with Germany. While the Kaiser had generally maintained a friendly attitude towards France until recently, the Pan-Germanists [3)] and their followers had done everything imaginable to prevent a friendly rapprochement

between the two great nations. The wild, aggressive writings of the Pan-Germanists naturally repeatedly provoked the long-deadening desire for revenge among the French chauvinists, and thus made the work of all those in France who strove for a friendly, lasting settlement with Germany more difficult. — "But what is your government's purpose now with its continued aggressive stance on the Morocco question? I know that mistakes may have been made on our part as well, and my colleagues and I are willing to repair any violations of the Madrid Convention that may have arisen through misunderstandings through an open, direct exchange of views between the two governments. But your government does not seem to desire such an exchange of views at all. Berlin insists on negotiating Moroccan issues only directly with the Sultan and completely sidelining us. But that, of course, is not possible. Our ambassador in Berlin reports that he is rarely received at the Foreign Office anymore. Prince Radolin also seems to have received instructions from Berlin to avoid a discussion with me. In contrast, you are rattling your sabers very ostentatiously, as if you wanted war at any price. I now ask the following: Would you be so kind as to leave for Karlsruhe this evening? According to our ambassador from Berlin, the Kaiser will arrive there tomorrow, returning from his Mediterranean tour to visit the Grand Duke. Count Bülow is also expected to arrive there tomorrow. Perhaps, through consultation with the Kaiser and Count Bülow, you will succeed in repairing the broken connection and initiating direct negotiations between our governments. We would be infinitely grateful to you for this; for we want peace, and not only that, but the initiation of a steadily growing friendship with Germany, based on mutual respect, for the purpose of jointly promoting civilization and maintaining world peace. Believe me, the moment is very favorable for this; but if this psychological moment is missed, it will probably never return. You have no idea how receptive public opinion here would currently be to a kind gesture from the Kaiser and your government. Our friend Armand has probably already told you that I recently had a lengthy discussion with the same man who, in his time, mediated between Prince Bismarck and Gambetta, as well as Jules Ferry, namely Prince von Henckel-Donnersmarck. He apparently sought to speak to me on Count Bülow's direct instructions. The Prince explained to me that there were only two possibilities: either a Franco-German alliance or war. I don't know, of course, whether these are the current ideas of the Kaiser and Count Bülow, or whether Prince Donnersmarck was merely expressing his own thoughts. An alliance, however desirable it may be for both sides, will of course not be achieved so quickly; but that doesn't mean there's any need to immediately suggest the other alternative and utter that dreadful word 'war.' Prince Radolin and I also discussed the idea of a systematic, friendly rapprochement between the two nations, which could possibly gradually lead to an alliance. The ambassador

was, of course, somewhat more cautious in his expressions. But what does it mean that he has been completely avoiding me for some time? Has he really received direct instructions in this regard from Berlin? I repeat: let us seek to reach a friendly agreement as soon as possible through a direct exchange of views between both governments, and the fruit of this will be a rapid rapprochement between the two nations, upon which we can then build. But if the current situation continues, God knows what will happen then, and in which direction things will develop in the future! So go to Karlsruhe this evening and do everything in your power. In doing so, you will be doing a great service not only to your fatherland, but also to world peace."

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1) Now we don't want to talk diplomacy, but common sense.

2) Jules Ferry, who was French Prime Minister from 1883 to 1885, was known to have been on friendly terms with Bismarck and tried to bring about a lasting rapprochement between France and Germany.

3) All-German.

When I promised the Prime Minister that I would leave for Karlsruhe that same evening and do my utmost, he thanked me very warmly and concluded by saying the following: "Our mutual friend Armand will give you some advice for your journey; we talked about it at length yesterday." As he shook my hand as he said goodbye, Mr. Rouvier nodded his head back and forth and said: "An nescis, mi fili, quantilla prudentia mundus regatur?" 1)

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1) "Don't you know, my son, with how little sense the world is governed?"

It was still very early in the day when Armand Lévy and I left Rouvier's Villa. Consequently, we drove directly back to the Boulevard des Capucines, and I rested for a few hours after my night's journey.

As I was having breakfast with Armand Lévy at the Café Paillard shortly after 1 a.m., he took a piece of paper from his pocket on which he had jotted down the various points Rouvier had asked him to inform me about before my departure.

"You will understand," he said to me, "that Rouvier, in his capacity as Prime Minister (Président du Conseil), could not communicate certain matters of an

extremely delicate nature to you directly. But you can be assured that everything I am about to tell you is 'rigoureusement exact' (rigorously exact).

So firstly: 'Rouvier, as you know, has already taken the portfolio of Foreign Affairs from Delcassé and is managing this position himself. In three to four weeks at the latest, however, Delcassé will resign completely as minister. If you see Count Bülow in Karlsruhe, please inform him of this in confidence. Delcassé is leaving because the Council of Ministers will no longer tolerate his arbitrary actions. His fellow ministers say, 'He has everything in his pocket, he doesn't watch anything and he comes to the Council with the things he has done.' So it is internal issues that are prompting his departure from the ministry. You can assure Count Bülow with absolute certainty that Delcassé is leaving, but you must make it explicitly clear to him that it would be a grave mistake if the German government, and especially the German press, were to portray Delcassé's disappearance as a victory for German diplomacy in the Moroccan question. The moment this happens, Delcassé would immediately be elevated to a hero by his supporters and a large part of public opinion in France, and then chauvinism would certainly begin to flourish among us.'

Then: 'King Edward, when he was recently in Paris on his way from Biarritz to London, told Rouvier and other ministers that there should be no further excitement in Paris. The Emperor and his advisors would soon calm down. But if the worst came to the worst, the French government could be assured of England's support. We ourselves here know perfectly well that in the event of war, England would intervene in our favor; But that wouldn't prevent us from being the ones who suffer the most. Rouvier therefore prefers not to have to seek England's support first; Delcassé, of course, thinks differently on this point.'

Third: 'As Rouvier himself has already explained to you, he and most of his colleagues are firmly determined to enter into the most friendly relationship possible with Germany, not just for now, but in the long run. As a personal friend, I can guarantee you that this is truly open and honest. But you will probably have already sensed it from Rouvier's own statements. Incidentally, Prince Radolin is also completely convinced of this. We know very well that Germany is very keen to obtain a coaling station, and possibly even a strip of land, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. I can now assure you most definitely that Rouvier is ready to discuss this point with him. From this fact alone you can see how keen Rouvier is to establish a lasting good relationship with Germany.'

Fourthly: 'As our ambassador from Berlin reports, the Emperor is to go from Karlsruhe to Metz to unveil a monument to the fallen warriors on the battlefield of Gravelotte. It is feared here that he might make a speech on this occasion which would be regarded as an affront by local public opinion. Would it not be possible for you to prevent such an eventuality during your presence in Karlsruhe? It would be good to avoid anything that could exacerbate the already overheated atmosphere and thus thwart any chance of a friendly and peaceful relaxation of the situation.

Early on the morning of May 5, I arrived in Karlsruhe from Paris and checked into the Hotel Germania. I had hardly got into bed to rest a little after the journey when I was called to the telephone. It was Betzold, who rang me from Berlin and wanted to speak to me urgently. He told me that five days ago, at Rouvier's instigation, he had travelled from Paris to Berlin to sound out Holstein to see if they would not be inclined in Wilhelmstrasse to enter into direct negotiations with the French government. He had received my telegram that I was going to Karlsruhe. He had long known from Rouvier that there was an intention to ask me to intervene in the pending matter. He himself had written various letters to me in England, but I had probably not received them. The whole affair was extremely complicated and delicate. He advised me to proceed with great caution. Holstein, whom he had spoken to repeatedly in Berlin, was very aggressive. Just yesterday evening, he had categorically declared to him for the third time that direct negotiations with the French government were out of the question. As Holstein claimed, he had learned that Delcassé had also tried to intrigue against Germany in Hungary, among other things. At least as long as Delcassé was a member of the ministry, there could be no question of a direct exchange of views with the French. He himself (Betzold) considered the situation to be extremely critical; one could not know what the next day would bring. He asked me to keep him informed about everything.

Naturally, this information from little Betzold was of the utmost importance to me. But my head was so busy that I could no longer fall asleep, and I decided to go straight to the Prussian legation and confide in the ambassador, Admiral von Eisendecher, with whom I had known each other for many years.

Herr von Eisendecher was originally a naval officer, but at Bismarck's instigation, he entered the diplomatic service in the mid-1870s. He then represented the German Empire for several years as ambassador to Tokyo and

Washington and later assumed the Prussian ambassadorship in Karlsruhe. During this time, he was repeatedly sent by the Kaiser on special missions to England and represented the Kaiser almost every year at the Cowes regattas aboard the "Meteor." Both he and his beautiful, amiable wife were extremely worldly and enjoyed great popularity everywhere abroad. It seems regrettable that a man like Herr von Eisendecher, who not only possessed a good political mind but also the backbone to assert his ideas, was virtually sidelined in foreign policy matters in Karlsruhe instead of being appointed to one of the more important ambassadorial posts. The latter did not happen because of the stubborn and eccentric despot in the Foreign Office, Holstein.

When I informed Mr. von Eisendecher of the reasons for my visit to Karlsruhe, I found him fully understanding of the entire situation. He deeply regretted Holstein's foolishness and delusion and promised to support me with the Chancellor. He invited me to breakfast, which the Baden ambassador and Federal Council plenipotentiary in Berlin also attended, and soon after dinner, we travelled together to the train station to receive Chancellor Count Bülow. The Emperor, who was returning from his Mediterranean tour, during which the famous landing in Tangier had taken place, was not expected in Karlsruhe until around 6:00 p.m. After a welcoming ceremony, during which I briefly mentioned the reason for my presence in Karlsruhe, the Chancellor and Mr. von Eisendecher travelled to the palace, where he stayed as the Grand Duke's guest. Count Bülow had asked me to visit him at the Grand Ducal Palace in fourteen hours.

Although I had instinctively noticed during the greeting at the train station that the Chancellor was not at all pleased by my sudden appearance in Karlsruhe, he received me in his salon with consummate courtesy. Perhaps very rarely has there ever been a personality who possessed such significant worldly talent as Prince Bülow, who almost never lost his composure even in the most difficult situations, never showed any sign of discontent, and who, moreover, was always one of the most amiable and witty companions, the likes of which are rarely found on this planet. No one, even those who in no way agreed with his policies and opposed them, can fail to admire these qualities of the Prince.

As an introduction to my demarche, I used the information I had received that morning by telephone from little Betzold in Berlin. I told the Chancellor that I was aware that Holstein had once again refused to enter into direct negotiations with the French government only yesterday, and that he had cited Mr. Delcassé's alleged intrigues against Germany in Hungary as one of the reasons for this. However, I had just returned from Paris, where I had seen Prime Minister

Rouvier, and I could assure him that Mr. Delcassé was completely finished as Minister. Rouvier had already taken the portfolio of Foreign Affairs from his hands, and it was only a matter of time before Delcassé would leave the Ministry completely.

Prince Bülow replied that he was surprised at how quickly and accurately I had already been informed about what had actually happened in Berlin yesterday. As for Mr Delcassé, he did not believe that he would leave the French Ministry in the foreseeable future. When I then remarked that I could not avoid assuring him once again, most emphatically, that Delcassé was about to disappear completely from the ministry, that Prime Minister Rouvier really had the open and honest desire to reach a friendly agreement with us on all points, and that he was even prepared to negotiate with us regarding the transfer of a coaling station, etc., on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, Prince Bülow replied: "The Imperial Government continues to hold the position that it can only negotiate with the Sultan of Morocco; it must therefore most emphatically refuse to enter into direct negotiations with the French Government. Moreover, a new regulation of economic relations with the Sherif Empire can only take place through an international conference of the signatory powers to the Madrid Convention of 1880. We must insist that France agree to participate in such a conference and to comply with the decisions laid down therein. We are in a position to let it depend on whether France complies with our wishes or not; should it not comply, we would naturally have to draw the utmost consequences."

To my remark that we could currently achieve more through direct negotiations than we had ever dreamed possible, and that the psychological moment had come in which we could establish a lasting friendly relationship with France, but that absolutely nothing could come of an international conference for us and that it would at most serve to officially demonstrate our isolation to the whole world, Prince Bülow replied as follows: "It goes without saying that Austria will be on our side; as for Italy, Visconti-Venosta has only very recently stated that the Italian government is firmly determined to side with Germany; and we can also indulge in the confident hope that even Russia, which owes Germany a great debt of gratitude for its attitude during the war with Japan, will not abandon us. On the contrary, France, along with England, would find itself completely isolated at an international conference."

When, in the further course of the conversation, the subject of England turned, and I told the Chancellor that we must be absolutely certain that, should it come to the worst, England would support France with all its forces, both at sea

and on land, Prince Bülow smiled and remarked: "You will never be able to convince me of that."

I soon sensed that the spirit of Holstein completely dominated the Chancellor at the time and therefore abandoned any further attempts to influence him.

The only thing left for me to do now was to try to speak to the Emperor himself and explain the whole situation to him.

I therefore went immediately to the Hereditary Grand Duke's palace. From long conversations I had with him during various visits he made to London, I knew how sensibly he was able to judge political matters and with what clarity of vision he saw the future. I intended to bring the current situation to his attention and ask him to persuade the Emperor to receive me. Unfortunately, the Hereditary Grand Duke was away. It was rumoured in well-informed circles in Karlsruhe that he had deliberately stayed away from the state capital during the Emperor's visit.

When I then went to a friend of mine who was close to the Emperor and asked him to ask His Majesty if he would be so kind as to receive me, he replied: "About half an hour ago, it would have been possible; but since then, as I tell you in the strictest confidence, the Imperial Chancellor has firmly barred any possible reception of you by His Majesty."

Since Prince Bülow had invited me to visit him again the following afternoon, I postponed my planned return to Paris that evening and went to Baden-Baden, where I stayed at the Hotel Stephanie and spent a very pleasant evening with some friends from Berlin whom I happened to meet there.

When I called on Prince Bülow again at the Grand Ducal Palace the following afternoon, he was, as always, extremely amiable, but he gave me the same negative statements as the day before, in doubly categorical terms. I knew immediately, of course, that he had contacted Holstein by cable regarding my demarches and had received a vigorous reply from him, which most likely also included some attacks against me, expressed in not overly affectionate terms.

On the morning of May 7, I arrived back in Paris, where I stayed for several days before returning to London. I immediately sought out Armand Lévy and

went with him to see Rouvier, whom I found in a very depressed mood. I also saw little Betzold, who had meanwhile returned from Berlin. He had seen Holstein shortly before his departure from Berlin and, from his remarks, had formed the firm impression that he wanted to bring about war at any cost. Holstein, as Betzold now told me, had also spoken to him in a very spiteful manner about my trip to Karlsruhe and my representations to the Chancellor there. Together with Mr. Betzold, I then visited Prince Radolin. The ambassador, however, was extremely reserved in his entire demeanour, indeed, compared to his usual behaviour toward me, downright unpleasant. After we said goodbye to Prince Radolin, I said to my companion: "There's an old man here in the embassy who doesn't know what to do." Betzold replied: "What a tremendous difference between this man and his predecessor, Prince Münster! Under the latter, such a critical situation could never have arisen; he would never have tolerated such dangerous mischief by Holstein and would probably have immediately raised the cabinet question directly with the Kaiser."

In fact, the role Prince Radolin played throughout the entire Moroccan crisis of 1905 was an extremely sad one. While he himself knew full well the catastrophe that Holstein's brutal and downright insane policies were bound to lead to, and was personally very much in favour of a friendly rapprochement between Germany and France, he lacked the courage to take a stand against Holstein's outrageous, disastrous game for the future. Instead, he allowed this stubborn despot to get away with everything and, on top of that, was jealous of anyone else who attempted, if at all possible, to avert the doom threatening Germany and all of Europe at the last moment.

In a very depressed mood and full of ominous forebodings for the future, I returned to London in mid-May. From Berlin, I repeatedly received authentic news that Holstein, supported by some politically unscrupulous publicists, was systematically continuing his warmongering and striving to poison the unsuspecting and politically indolent public opinion in Germany in order to win it over to his own ends and thus place the Kaiser, who, deep down, remained averse to any aggressive action against France, in a difficult position.

In my despair over the precipitous development of events, and in the terrible feeling of powerlessness at being unable to avert the catastrophe that was clearly before my eyes, I poured out my heart one evening to my old friend, Dr. Hans Esser, the long-time London representative of the Kölnische Zeitung.

Dr. Esser had been working as a journalist in London since 1867, with brief interruptions. After traveling to the Balkans as a correspondent for the Kölnische Zeitung in the mid-1980s and spending some time there, he was appointed the newspaper's permanent representative in Paris. He remained there for barely two years, however, and in 1894 exchanged his position with Dr. Schneider, who was living in London as a correspondent for the Kölnische Zeitung. From then on, he worked in London in that position without interruption until the outbreak of the First World War. When the war broke out, he was already over seventy years old. Despite this, he was not allowed to return to Germany but was interned as an enemy alien in Alexandra Park. His already unsatisfactory health deteriorated noticeably, and he died in the summer of 1915. Only shortly before his death was he permitted to exchange the internment camp for the home of an English friend. I couldn't really claim that this more than ruthless treatment of my old friend Dr. Hans Esser, a man who had spent almost his entire life striving to resolve misunderstandings between England and Germany, had particularly won me over on behalf of the English authorities responsible for them. My friend Hans Esser was not only an excellent journalist with extensive political experience and always a good sense of the situation, but also a very reliable, straightforward character and a loyal, devoted friend. He also possessed considerable literary knowledge and was equally well-versed in English and French literature as well as German. He frequented my house, and everyone who met him valued him as an extremely pleasant and interesting companion. Even King Edward, to whom I had once introduced Dr. Esser during the regattas in Cowes when he was still Prince of Wales, held him in high esteem.

Dr. Esser followed the developments of the Moroccan crisis in 1905 closely. Esser had exactly the same anxious forebodings as I did, and when I described the entire situation to him one evening after my return from Karlsruhe and Paris, he became very serious and remarked: "Russia has been temporarily paralysed militarily by the war in the Far East and the revolution. If war breaks out with France, we will probably overrun the latter militarily very quickly. But England, as we both know very well, will intervene in favour of France; we will immediately lose all our colonies, our merchant fleet, and our overseas trade. Morally, we will have the entire world against us, and ultimately, even America will probably intervene in favour of France. It is your sacred duty to leave no means unused to thwart Holstein's policy, which borders on madness, and to avert the impending disaster."

When I related to Dr. Esser, among other things, that the Chancellor had told me during my conversation with him in Karlsruhe that I would never be able to

convince him that England would side with France on land and sea in the event of war, he remarked that there was only one way to avert the impending catastrophe: by attempting to induce King Edward to declare unequivocally in Berlin that England would intervene in favour of France in any war under any circumstances. I agreed with Dr. Esser's view and decided to take appropriate steps in this direction immediately. He advised me, however, to proceed very cautiously in this matter, and said that he himself intended to describe the situation in broad outline, as I had told it to him, in a secret report to the editor-in-chief of the Kölnische Zeitung, but that he would not mention anything about my intended approach to King Edward, because such a step, if it should by chance become known, would probably be deliberately misinterpreted by Holstein and my other political enemies and used against me.

In this connection I would like to mention that the then representative of the "Frankfurter Zeitung" in London, Dr. Otto, who was also an excellent journalist of good political judgment and great foresight, viewed the whole situation in exactly the same way as Dr. Esser did.

The morning after my conversation with Dr. Esser, I went to see Lord Knollys, King Edward's private secretary, a friend of mine for many years. Before I stepped out of my comfort zone, I first probed him about King Edward's views and perception of the situation at the time. During our conversation, Lord Knollys made the following statement: "The King is of the opinion that things will calm down very soon in Berlin and that nothing serious will be done to force France to make any concessions against its will on the Moroccan question, because they must know full well that England would not tolerate any violation of France in this case. The King also confidently hopes that Mr. Delcassé will very soon resume the leadership of foreign affairs."

I hardly need to emphasize how shocked I was by this statement from Lord Knollys! I was well aware of the views that actually prevailed in our Foreign Office at the time. The whole situation was truly ripe for a catastrophe due to misconceptions and misunderstandings.

After some reflection, I replied to Lord Knollys: "You have no idea how shocked I was by your remark, for I gather from it that the seriousness of the situation is by no means realized in London. If we are to avoid a catastrophe, the misconceptions that exist in London as well as in Berlin must be dispelled as quickly as possible. For the time being, I will limit myself to making the following statements to you: 'I know for a fact that in Berlin, without wishing to

interfere directly in the internal affairs of France, they will not accept that Mr. Delcassé will soon resume the leadership of foreign affairs; on the contrary, they are waiting for him to leave the ministry altogether. Otherwise, they categorically refuse to enter into direct negotiations with the French government at all, but will negotiate only with the Sultan of Morocco. Moreover, they insist that a new settlement of affairs in Morocco be brought about by an international conference. But what seems most dangerous to me is the fact that people in Wilhelmstrasse absolutely refuse to believe that, as I myself have long known, England will support France on land and sea in an emergency."

Lord Knollys replied: "What you have just told me is largely known to our government and the King. But neither the King nor the government believes that people in Berlin are serious about this. On the contrary, the King considers this saber-rattling to be a bluff. But what seems most worrying to me, too, is the fact that, as you say, people in Berlin do not want to believe in England intervening on behalf of France in an emergency and, in turn, consider our attitude to be a bluff."

In conclusion, Lord Knollys said that he was very glad to have had this discussion with me and that he would inform the King immediately upon his return to London.

A few days later, early in the morning, while I was still fast asleep, I received a telephone call from Lord Knollys. He asked me to visit him in his study at Buckingham Palace within an hour at the latest, if possible, as he had something important to tell me.

When I greeted Lord Knollys, he first apologized for having invited me at such an early hour—it was barely 8:30 when I arrived—and said that the King, who was about to leave for a few days, wished to speak to me immediately after breakfast. Lord Knollys then disappeared, returned a quarter of an hour later, and asked me to follow him into the King's study. The King was sitting at his desk, on which lay a mass of documents and letters, smoking one of his long Corona cigars, as usual. He greeted me very warmly and said with a hearty laugh: "I know you're a late riser, but hopefully it won't harm your health if you had to get up so early for a change. However, this is the only time I can speak with you before my departure. I am very anxious to see you today, because Lord Knollys has reported to me his conversation with you, and I cannot hide the fact that what you said to him has greatly worried me. If the opinion of the leading political figures in Berlin regarding the current crisis is as you described it to Lord

Knollys, then we are certainly facing a catastrophe in Europe. But I would like to know one thing first: what does the Kaiser really think about this affair?" I replied to the King as follows: "I haven't spoken to His Majesty himself recently, because certain people have done everything imaginable to prevent His Majesty from receiving me. However, I know quite authentically, from personalities in the Emperor's immediate entourage, that His Majesty was from the very beginning opposed to the entire Moroccan campaign against France and was only extremely reluctant to allow himself to be persuaded to land in Tangier. I don't know exactly what His Majesty thinks today, but I am firmly convinced that His Majesty still wishes to maintain peace by all means. Nevertheless, it could happen that His Majesty, if certain personalities were to succeed in artificially inciting the equally peaceful public opinion in Germany, would suddenly find himself in a difficult situation."

"I know what you mean," the King then remarked, turning to Lord Knollys, who had been present throughout the entire conversation, and said: "Of course, we already know from Lascelles that this infernal mischief-maker Baron Holstein is at the bottom of the whole affair." [1)]

I expressly emphasize here that the name Holstein never even passed my lips; and the King himself immediately identified him as the originator of the entire crisis.

When the King then asked me: "But what is the attitude of Imperial Chancellor Count Bülow to these machinations of Baron Holstein?" I simply shrugged my shoulders and remained silent.

"Strange circumstances," the king muttered to himself, "I really want to know who actually rules Germany." Then he continued: "It is very difficult to form a true picture of the Germans' political thought processes; one never knows what they actually want. If one knew that, it would be considerably easier to deal with them, but it seems to me that, besides the Kaiser, many other unpredictable factors are at play in foreign policy. First, we were prepared to reach an agreement with the Germans on the Moroccan question. They didn't want that. Then we reached an agreement with France on this issue, and the Kaiser told me that Morocco didn't interest him at all and that he was entirely in agreement with the treaty between us and France. After a year, Berlin suddenly demands an international revision of the provisions of the Madrid Convention (of 1880). France, which is prepared to reach a friendly agreement with Germany, is told in

Berlin that it cannot negotiate with them, but only with the Sultan of Morocco. So what do your people in Berlin actually want, if only I could find out?" When I replied to the King that I myself was not in a position to form an idea of what they really wanted, he asked me what I thought he and the English government could do to bring about a peaceful solution to this extremely complicated situation. I replied as follows: "At the instigation of Prime Minister Rouvier, who asked me to come to Paris to discuss the situation with him, I went to Karlsruhe and tried to persuade Count Bülow to enter into direct negotiations with the French government. My efforts were unsuccessful. However, from Count Bülow's statements, I gathered that one of his main demands was that France should declare its willingness to agree to a new settlement of affairs in Morocco through an international conference. France, as Your Majesty knows, is still stubbornly resisting this for the time being. Furthermore, I gathered from Count Bülow's statements that he absolutely refuses to believe that, as I, like almost every German living in London, have long known, England would side with France in the event of war. The only way to bring about a peaceful solution to the current crisis is to play with open cards everywhere in order to prevent fatal misunderstandings and the emergence of further misconceptions. Since Your Majesty has had the grace to ask me for my frank opinion, I leave the following to Your Majesty's discretion: 'Would it not perhaps be possible for Your Majesty's Government to find ways and means to persuade France to accept the proposal for an international conference? Would it not also be possible for Your Majesty to make it clear in Berlin that England would indeed immediately side with France in the event of war, so that no further illusions would be entertained? Furthermore, I hope Your Majesty will not resent me for pointing out that, as I am certain, Mr. Delcassé's continued presence in the ministry would make a peaceful solution to the crisis very difficult, if not impossible.'"

At my last remark regarding Mr. Delcassé's continued service in the ministry, the King's features darkened, and he stared ahead for a while with an expression of displeasure.

Soon afterward, however, he said in a very friendly tone: "As you know, I have always been careful to play my cards straight with both the German and any other government. Unfortunately, I have good reason to believe that the Emperor and his advisors do not always follow the same principle with me. Recently, I again heard of matters from Petersburg that—to be honest—have greatly astonished me and my government. I prefer not to dwell on them. As for your suggestions, I fully understand that they are well-intentioned in the interest of

peace. They also seem practical and effective to me. In any case, I will immediately contact my responsible advisors in this regard."

Then the King looked at his watch, rose, shook my hand with a very friendly smile, and I was dismissed.

As I stood at the door and bowed again, the king said, "I hope we will continue to stay in touch on this difficult and perilous matter. If you have any news for me, please contact Knollys immediately."

Chapter VI.

Immediately after my conversation with King Edward, I telephoned Dr. Hans Esser and invited him to breakfast to discuss the entire situation with him once again. I recounted the course of my conversation with the King, and he seemed very pleased. He felt it had been the last resort to maintain peace despite Holstein's fanatical and rabid folly. "Isn't it horrible to think," he remarked, "that a peace-loving nation of sixty million like ours should be driven, unsuspectingly and without any reason, into a bloody war by the eccentricity of a single man whose sick mind currently dominates the influential political circles in Berlin, a war whose final outcome seems more than doubtful due to the certain interference of England and probably other states as well?" Dr. Esser again warned me emphatically not to speak to anyone about my demarche to King Edward, as Holstein, if he found out, would definitely try to stitch things up with me using his unscrupulous methods. I followed his advice and remained completely silent. Nevertheless, Holstein soon learned of my conversation with King Edward, namely through Prince Radolin in Paris. How he had learned of it has always remained a mystery to me. In any case, through Armand Lévy, I was later able to establish that neither Prime Minister Rouvier, who had been aware of my demarche through English channels, nor any other minister ever spoke to Prince Radolin about it.

Dr. Esser advised me to go to Berlin as soon as possible to inform myself about the further development of the crisis and thus be in a position to intervene in any appropriate manner if necessary.

A few days later, I went to Berlin. The day before my departure from London, I saw Lord Knollys, who informed me that, at the King's instigation, the Cabinet had decided to clarify in Berlin the position England intended to take in the event of war between Germany and France, so that any doubts about it could no longer arise. He further told me that the serious news that had arrived in recent days had worried the King more than ever. The King was now determined to enforce the preservation of peace by all means. He would most likely therefore also personally contact the Kaiser.

On the evening of July 2, I arrived in Berlin. I did not stay there for the time being, however, but left the following morning to visit my elderly mother in Silesian Upper Lusatia.

On the evening of June 5, the eve of the Crown Prince and Princess's wedding anniversary, I arrived back in Berlin, and the following day I was invited to breakfast with Prince Henckel von Donnersmarck at his apartment on Pariser Platz, from where I could witness the Crown Princess's entry through the Brandenburg Gate. The old Prince was very curious to hear from me how things were currently looking in London and Paris. We had a long conversation about the entire situation, and he spoke very disparagingly about Holstein's almost insanely misguided policy, which unfortunately still holds the Chancellor in check. "It is perhaps one of the greatest follies in world history," the Prince remarked, "that our government has not taken advantage of the favorable opportunity to reach a permanent agreement with France. To achieve this goal, we should have let Morocco and other similar plunder be jetissoned. I fear the moment has already passed, will never return, and ultimately, perhaps now, but certainly later, we will have to cross arms with France." The Prince then recounted to me all the details of his conversation, which he had had with Prime Minister Rouvier in Paris a few weeks earlier at the request of the Chancellor, and noted that he had deliberately been somewhat explicit in order to clearly demonstrate to him the dangers to world peace that would exist if a lasting friendly relationship, and if possible an alliance, between the two nations were not finally achieved.

Soon after breakfast, a large number of invited guests, both gentlemen and ladies, arrived to watch the festive procession from the balcony. Among them was a nephew of the old Prince, the well-known National Liberal parliamentarian Prince Heinrich of Schönaich-Carolath.

Unfortunately, this excellent man, who always possessed the courage of his convictions, died last year. Because of his modern and very liberal views, he was almost universally called "the Red Prince." He was also nicknamed “Butterheinrich” because of the leading role he played in the adoption of the Margarine Law in the Reichstag.

When he saw me, he immediately came up to me and asked me to tell him my latest impressions from London and Paris about the vexed Moroccan crisis.

After I gave him a brief description of my impressions, he spoke very sharply about Holstein and then continued: "Look down here at the crowd surging back and forth in festive spirit on Unter den Linden; do you think even a single person suspects that just a few houses away from here, on Wilhelmstrasse, sits a great fool who holds the strings of our foreign policy in his hands and is

only thinking about how he can quickly involve the German people in a bloody war for no reason at all and bring about a catastrophe in Europe? Unfortunately, just as clueless and indolent about foreign affairs as the vast majority are those here in the Reichstag. We continue to pursue our miserable parochial politics there and don't care at all that a madman, with a fuse in his hand, is about to set the entire Reich on fire."

The Red Prince was right. A few days later, when I went to the Reichstag and conversed with the leaders of the various parties in the corridors, I observed that they had virtually no interest in the currently acute Moroccan crisis and other foreign policy issues. 'Whatever the high Wilhelmstrasse does, it'll be fine,' they evidently thought. Occasionally, I also encountered a few world-devourers who seemed to simply regard the entire African continent as a German domain and the Mediterranean as a German inland lake.

Someone, however, who was in a very agitated state of mind about the course of the Moroccan crisis was the socialist leader August Bebel. I first met him in 1897, through Prince Heinrich Carolath. On the same day, he also introduced me to the then leader of the Free People's Party, Eugen Richter. It was just around the time that Herr von Tirpitz began his first major naval agitation. On the day the Red Prince introduced me to Bebel and Eugen Richter, I had a discussion with both these two personalities, as well as with Dietrich Hahn, the leader of the Farmers' League, who belonged to the conservative party, about the adventurous naval plans of the Kaiser and Herr von Tirpitz. All three of these personalities, however heterogeneous their views otherwise, agreed, using almost exactly the same arguments, that any attempt by Germany to create a large-scale battle fleet would inevitably drive England into the arms of France and Russia. Even Bebel declared that, above all, we must keep our powder dry on land, so as not to one day be overrun by Tsarist imperialism and Pan-Slavism.

Just like Dietrich Hahn and Eugen Richter, he also described the naval plans of the Kaiser and Herr von Tirpitz as dangerous megalomania that would one day plunge us into disaster.

Naturally, I was very interested in learning August Bebel's views on the Moroccan crisis, and when I saw him standing behind a pillar in the Reichstag's galleries, I approached him and greeted him. He was just reading a letter. He immediately interrupted his reading and said to me: "I'm glad to see you to tell you that we (the Socialists) will not be marching. I would be grateful if you would inform the gentlemen in Wilhelmstrasse." He was in an extremely irritable

mood and seemed to believe that I was still a friend of Holstein and one of the warmongers in the Foreign Office. "You are mistaken, Mr. Bebel!" I replied, "if you should assume that I have anything to do with the warmongers in the office; on the contrary, I have done everything in my power to prevent the war and will continue to do so." "So," Bebel remarked, "I'm glad to hear that. Then we can talk openly about the situation together, but preferably somewhere other than here." I then suggested that we meet in the evening at some pub where we could talk undisturbed. Finally, we agreed to meet at 9:00 p.m. at the well-known beer restaurant on Taubenstraße, called "Die Hütte."

When I arrived at the Hütte shortly after 9:00 a.m., I found August Bebel already there. He was sitting at a round table in a corner, busy eating a portion of bratwurst with potato salad. After we had greeted each other and I had taken a seat next to him, he remarked that he was very hungry and exhausted. He had had a very difficult day with the usual annoyances over internal party matters and was only now finding time to eat something. Indeed, during our gathering, he developed a very blessed appetite, devouring not only two large portions of sausages with potato salad, but also a veal cutlet and a pancake.

We were sitting alone, of course, and the neighbouring tables were also empty at the time. But August Bebel had barely finished his meal, so that our conversation could only really get going, when I suddenly noticed a gentleman with a reddish, potato-shaped nose and gold-rimmed glasses reading a newspaper at a neighbouring table. He must have crept there very carefully, because none of us had noticed his appearance. I watched him for a while and noticed that he kept staring at the same spot in his newspaper, apparently not reading at all, but listening to our conversation. When I signalled to August Bebel that someone was sitting close behind him and seemed to be following our conversation, he looked around. Then he put his finger to his mouth and said to me: "I'm really very tired this evening, I think I'd better go home." Then we called the waiter, paid, and left the restaurant. When we were on the street, August Bebel started to laugh heartily and said: "It's strange that whenever I go into a restaurant, this fat little kid and a tall, gaunt gentleman alternately sit at the next table. In any case, you can't say that these two political detectives know their business particularly well. We Germans don't understand such things at all, because we make everything too crude and transparent."

Then we strolled slowly down the street, looking back from time to time to see if the fat kid with the reddish, potato-shaped nose or anyone else was following us, and turned onto Friedrichstrasse. August Bebel, who had seemed to

be in a grumpy mood at the beginning of the evening, became increasingly cheerful after this little episode and was finally in a good mood. We then began to consider which bar we should head to in order to finally have an opportunity to calmly discuss the Moroccan crisis. Finally, I suggested we go to the Hotel Kaiserhof, where I was staying. August Bebel agreed, and we went there and sat chatting in my living room until about 4 a.m., drinking a few bottles of old Bordeaux wine.

At first, we touched on all sorts of current news and only very gradually came to the looming Moroccan crisis, which was becoming more acute by the day. One remark August Bebel made at the beginning of our conversation particularly struck me. He said that in Bismarck's time, although he was notoriously no friend of the Socialists, there had always been a certain contact between the Wilhelmstrasse and his party. The mediating role was first given up by Lothar Bucher, later by Rottenburg, and to some extent by Rudolf Lindau. "Since Bismarck's dismissal," Bebel remarked, "however we Socialists—not that we care about it at all—have, by and large, been out of touch with the influential government circles."

In France, Bebel said, things were quite different. There, the Socialist leaders were usually in close contact with the key figures in the ministry; for example, since the beginning of the Moroccan crisis, Jaurès has been constantly kept informed by Prime Minister Rouvier.

When I told Bebel about Lord Salisbury's proposal to the Kaiser in August 1895 regarding the partition of the Orient, as well as about the English offers of alliance in 1898, 1899, and 1901, he was at first so dismayed that he could hardly believe it. But after I had convinced him of the absolute authenticity of these facts, he launched into fierce denunciations, using the sharpest language, of the blind, aimless, emotional, and illusionary policies of the Kaiser and his chosen advisors. In this context, he spoke of Bismarck and said, verbatim: "We socialists certainly have no reason to speak particularly well of Bismarck, for he was our enemy, and we often fought fiercely against him. Nevertheless, I have great admiration for him, for he was a man and knew what he wanted. I am also more convinced than ever that it is solely thanks to him that peace has been maintained in Europe since the founding of the Empire, although the political methods he used to achieve his goal have often seemed somewhat Spanish to me. I have no doubt that if Bismarck had been offered such opportunities during his term of office as you describe to me to reach a permanent agreement with England, he would have immediately seized them."

When during our conversation the conversation finally turned to the current Moroccan crisis, Bebel remarked that he was well informed about the goings-on behind the scenes, namely through his friend and comrade Jaurès in Paris, who, as mentioned, had received his information directly from Prime Minister Rouvier. He was not at all interested in receiving any information from Wilhelmstrasse, for he was not willing, as the bourgeois parties in the Reichstag did, to be lied to officially, unofficially, or even confidentially. Everything that came from Wilhelmstrasse, he regarded from the outset as a premeditated fraud. He was hoping to be able to welcome his friend Jaurès in Germany very soon, and then he would learn even more. It was a great scandal, however, that the Reich government was doing everything imaginable to prevent Jaurès from visiting Germany and to forbid him from speaking. In any case, he would not allow anything to deter him from continuing to work with Jaurès to preserve the Peace and the establishment of lasting friendly relations between Germany and France. He considered it absolutely monstrous that individual chauvinistic criminals, such as Baron Holstein and his associates in Germany, and Mr. Delcassé and his followers in France, should be permitted, for no reason at all, to unleash a bloody war between two civilized nations, from which a general European war or even a world war would inevitably develop. One thing, however, was inviolably certain: that in the event of war, the Social Democratic parties in Germany as in France would issue the strict order to the masses not to march." He, Bebel, expressly requested me to make this clear to Wilhelmstrasse.

After August Bebel had made some sharp attacks against the "newly minted Prince Bülow," noting, among other things, that his appointment as Prince by the Emperor on the same day (June 6) on which Mr. Delcassé had officially left the Ministry would have a direct irritating effect on French public opinion, he turned to Russia. He said literally: "As far as our eastern neighbours are concerned, the situation is different there than with our western neighbours. I fear that in the long run we Germans will not be able to avoid a clash with Russian imperialism and Pan-Slavism. There in the East lies our true and only dangerous enemy. Against him, we must always be on our guard and keep our powder dry on land. If it ever came to blows against Russia, which has only been temporarily paralysed by the Japanese War, we socialists would march 'like a bone [1)]. Our cultural and economic sphere of expansion lies in the East, as well as in the Near East. But we must also be clear that, regardless of what form of government may exist in Russia in the future, Pan-Slavism in conjunction with Tartarism will always remain a danger to us. Only recently I reread Bakunin's correspondence with Ogaryov and other writings by him. But these people are Asians, and the

methods they advocate also belong in Asia, not in Europe. I fear that in the long run, we socialists of Western culture will never be able to identify with the worldview of these people."

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1) A well-known old Berlin expression that Bebel liked to use. It means something like "as one man."

When August Bebel said goodbye to me around 4 a.m., he mentioned that he was currently writing a long letter from him to Jaurès. He didn't yet know when he would be able to send this letter, since, after certain experiences, he was very reluctant to entrust his correspondence with Jaurès to the post office and, if time wasn't pressing, preferred to wait for a safe opportunity to deliver his letters.

Since I had recently told Bebel that I intended to return to London via Paris, I assumed that with his remark about sending his letters to Jaurès through safe means, he intended to ask me indirectly whether I would be willing to take his work-in-progress letter with me to Paris. When I offered to send his letter, Bebel replied that he would be very grateful if I were willing to do so, but added that I must expressly promise not to post his letter in Paris, but to deliver it personally to Jaurès. We then agreed that I would visit him once more in the Reichstag before my departure to receive his letter.

As I had shortly before told Bebel that I intended to return to London via Paris, I assumed that by his statement about the transportation of his letters to Jaurès by safe opportunities he intended to put an indirect question to me as to whether I was prepared to take his letter, which was in course of preparation, with me to Paris. When I offered to carry his letter, Bebel replied that he would be very grateful if I would do so, but remarked that I must expressly undertake not to post his letter in Paris, but to place it personally in Jaures' hands. We then agreed that I would call on him again at the Reichstag before my departure to receive his letter.

Late in the afternoon, a few hours before my departure for Paris, I spoke to Bebel in the Reichstag after contacting him by telephone. The entire building was almost empty, as the Reichstag was not in session that day. Since there was no one in the reading room either, Bebel led me there, and we sat together chatting for about half an hour.

"What you told me the other night about the various possibilities for alliances with England," he began, "naturally interested me immensely. I've thought about it a lot over the last few days. It is certainly a scandal that such important developments in foreign policy are being concealed from the people's representatives by the government. At the very least, all party leaders should have been informed of this confidentially. Above all, I was moved by Lord Salisbury's proposal of August 1895 regarding the partition of Turkey. Acceptance of this proposal and a wise, appropriate implementation of this idea would have solved the entire social question in Germany by at least two-thirds. What, then, are the social ills in the German Empire primarily based on? Yet solely in the fact that Germany's land area can support a maximum of 40 million inhabitants in a humane manner, while the population today already exceeds 65 million. Africa and the South Seas are of no use to us at all, for we will never be able to establish large-scale settlements there and raise children of the white race. I maintain that our sphere of expansion lies in the East and the Near East." After Bebel had then, as I already mentioned in the first volume of my memoirs, lashed out in sharp terms at the Kaiser and his advisors for not accepting Salisbury's proposal, he returned to the Moroccan crisis and said: "I hope you have found an opportunity to make it clear to the gentlemen in Wilhelmstrasse that we socialists do not intend to march in the event of war. It is incomprehensible how certain publicists close to influential government circles can continue their warmongering even more than before. As far as I can see, even among the great masses of bourgeois society here, there is not the slightest desire for warlike adventures; but such a systematic poisoning of the entire atmosphere and misleading of public opinion could ultimately create a warlike mood whose consequences would be irreparable. As for the Kaiser, I will believe your repeated assurances that he is utterly opposed to war. In that case, I take my hat off to him."

As I said goodbye to Bebel, he handed me a tightly sealed letter for Jaurès. He once again urged me most emphatically not to post this letter in Paris, but to deliver it personally to Jaurès, whom I should send him my warmest regards.

During my stay in Berlin, I deliberately did not appear at the Foreign Office, knowing full well that Holstein would immediately learn of it. Instead, I visited Baron von Richthofen, the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who had always been well-disposed towards me, at his official residence on Königgrätzer Strasse. As he was about to leave, he could only devote a few minutes to me. He said very little about the Moroccan crisis itself, but shrugged his shoulders and shook his

head when I related various impressions I had gained on this matter in London and Paris. From his entire demeanour, it was easy to see how disparagingly he judged Holstein's policies, under whose influence the Chancellor still stood at the time. Finally, he remarked that Holstein was currently seething with rage against the Kaiser, specifically because of a remark the Kaiser had made to the French General Delacroix, who, as the official representative of the French Republic, had attended the wedding celebrations of the Crown Prince and Princess. On the morning of June 7, the Secretary of State recounted, the Kaiser, accompanied by the French General, had travelled to the Döberitz military training area to show the latter some new inventions concerning the firing of machine guns. Immediately upon greeting him, General Delacroix had informed the Kaiser that Mr. Delcassé had definitively resigned from the Ministry the previous day. The Kaiser had then replied that he was very pleased with this news and that the Moroccan crisis was now over. Immediately upon his return to Berlin, the General had gone to the French Embassy to convey the Kaiser's statement to the Ambassador, who, of course, had promptly reported it to Paris. Holstein was now working to counteract the calming effect of the Kaiser's statement in Paris and to make it clear there that the Moroccan crisis was by no means over. He had by no means abandoned his intention to provoke open conflict.

When I told the Secretary of State about my discussions with August Bebel, and in particular his statement that the Socialists would not march in the event of war, he remarked that Holstein was already aware that I had been repeatedly seen with Bebel, which had only increased his anger against me. He, the Secretary of State, advised me, as my friend, to leave Berlin as soon as possible, because one never knew what steps Holstein, with his well-known ruthless methods, might take against me. After all, he was currently in power, and it was not at all impossible that he might have me arrested by the political police under some flimsy pretext.

When I visited the Secretary of State again in Berlin in the autumn of that year, he told me that Holstein, in his boundless rage because I had thwarted his policy, had indeed had such an intention.

Chapter VII

After arriving in Paris, I immediately went to Jaurès to give him Bebel's letter. Since I didn't find him and learned that he probably wouldn't be home until late that evening, I left my business card and a short note informing him that I had just arrived from Berlin and had a letter from Bebel to deliver to him personally. I asked him to let me know when I could visit him the following day to deliver the letter.

Early in the morning of the next day, Jaurès appeared at my hotel to pay me a return visit. His entire demeanour was exquisitely courteous, and during our conversation, which lasted about an hour, he displayed an extremely pleasant, touching, natural kindness, without the slightest pretence. As we said our goodbyes, I felt as if I had spoken with a man I hadn't just met, but had known intimately for many years. I gained the impression of him as a genuinely committed idealist and, in every respect, a selfless philanthropist who possessed the courage and unwavering determination to assert and implement his ideas in the interest of the common good of humanity. His refined yet entirely natural way of expressing himself was enchanting, and the melodious tone of his voice was extremely soothing. He was by no means intolerant of views other than his own. Even when discussing points on which I, as a realist politician who accepts the world as it is and, unfortunately, will always remain so due to the eternal laws of nature, could not help but disagree, he did not show the slightest irritation, but rather tried to persuade me in the most amiable way.

When I handed him the sealed letter from August Bebel, he opened it, quickly skimmed through it, and then put it in his pocket. He did not say a word about the contents of the letter, but spoke in the most cordial terms about his friend Bebel, who was an excellent, straightforward character and with whom he got along excellently despite his perhaps excessive dogmatism.

On the Morocco question, Jaurès spoke sharply about the warmongers on both sides, especially against Mr. Delcassé and Baron Holstein, but did not use a single expression that could even remotely be described as unparliamentary. He spoke with great respect, however, of Prime Minister Rouvier, whose conduct throughout the dangerous crisis he described as prudent and tactful. "In all serious crises, both international and domestic," he remarked, "what matters primarily is whether capable and honest men are currently at the helm of state affairs, or whether the fate of the people is in inept or even malicious hands. In

the former case, the crisis is overcome; in the latter, it usually leads to a catastrophe, which the poor, unsuspecting people then have to pay for. Woe to Europe," he continued, "if chauvinism, which has declined sharply in recent years, should raise its head again in France under the leadership of men such as Delcassé! Personally, I do not doubt the love of peace of your Emperor, nor of the great masses of the German people, but I fear very strongly that a small number of malicious and ambitious personalities in your Germany might succeed not only in poisoning your own people, but also in helping a new, dangerous chauvinism to triumph here."

In the interest of historical truth, I believe it is necessary to emphasize that Jaurès, strangely enough, spoke of Wilhelm II in an extremely friendly manner, almost in cordial terms. He said of the Kaiser that, although he felt that he was, in his own (Jaurès') opinion, highly "unbalanced," he nevertheless represented a sympathetic figure. Perhaps it was precisely his faults, especially his theatrical temperament, that appealed to the "esprit" of the French. It cannot be denied that the Kaiser, especially in France, enjoyed a considerable popularity among broad sections of the population.

In this context, I would like to mention a small, characteristic episode that I myself experienced in Paris in 1894.

At the beginning of the 1890s, two French officers, on behalf of their superior authority, chartered a steam yacht in England to sail to Kiel and other German naval ports under the English flag and spy on the fortifications there. By chance, the agent firm that had arranged the rental of the yacht in question included a German named Raincke as a co-owner. Since the French officers' behaviour struck him as suspicious, he reported the incident to the German naval attaché in London. When the officers in question arrived in Kiel on their yacht, they were observed and ultimately caught red-handed in the act of espionage. They were subsequently arrested and sentenced by the competent court to long-term imprisonment. If I am not mistaken, they served their sentences in the Glatz Fortress in Silesia. When, in 1894, the President of the French Republic, Sadi Carnot, fell victim to a nefarious anarchist assassination in Lyon, the Emperor, who possessed a certain personal affection for the murdered president, endeavoured to show his sympathy to the French people in every way possible. Among other things, he immediately pardoned, in a gracious gesture, the two French officers imprisoned in the Glatz Fortress.

A few days after the assassination of President Carnot, when I was having dinner with some French and American friends at the Café Durant in the rue Royale in Paris, we suddenly heard extra leaves being shouted in the street. At the same time, the cry "vive l'Empereur" rang out from the throats of large crowds of people walking around. Among my friends also some enraging Bonapartists, such as a member of the family of the Counts of Montebello. Suddenly, the latter raised his glass and asked us to let his pretender to the throne, Prince Victor Bonaparte, who had apparently been proclaimed emperor by the crowd outside, live. When we then went into the street to see what was actually going on, we did not hear the shouts of "vive Victor Bonaparte", but "vive Guillaume", to the great disappointment of our Bonapartist friends. The extra sheets that were distributed contained a decree by Wilhelm II, which had been calculated to affect the French psyche and which happened to be very happily edited, concerning the pardon of the French officers imprisoned in the fortress of Glatz.

When I recounted this little episode to Jaurès, he laughed heartily and remarked: "We French are a very funny nation. A small, contemporary gesture—provided it is elegantly formed—very often spontaneously inspires us and, for the moment, completely captivates us."

In the autumn of 1905, I visited Jaurès one afternoon in the Chamber of Deputies. Outwardly, he was just as polite and amiable as he had been during my conversation with him in June of that year. However, from his cautious and reserved demeanour, it was not difficult to recognize that his previously friendly feelings for Germany had at least cooled considerably, if not turned into the exact opposite. With evidently deep inner resentment, he spoke of "Schiemannism" in Germany. By this, he was referring to the extremely unwise and tactless press campaign that had been launched in several newspapers at Holstein's instigation and had been initiated by the politically completely uninformed Professor Schiemann, who came from the Baltic provinces.

Although the British government had declared quite unequivocally in Berlin in June that England would immediately side with France in the event of war, Holstein still hadn't come to his senses. On the contrary, this declaration by England had initially only further irritated him and spurred him on to continue his war policy. The slogan he now issued and Professor Schiemann disseminated in the press was: "For what we should lose through England in the event of war, we will compensate ourselves in France." This was the so-called scourge theory, one of the most nonsensical, tactless, and disastrous ideas ever conceived by a human

mind. But such a crazy theory, no matter which nation pursues it, will ultimately only prove its own undoing!

During my conversation with Jaurès in the fall of 1905, I naturally brought up August Bebel and his continued efforts in the interest of peace. Jaurès, however, did not respond to my remarks, but ostentatiously evaded the issue and steered the conversation to other matters. Not once did the name Bebel pass his lips during our conversation, which, of course, astonished me greatly. Only later did I learn by chance that strong differences of opinion and heated arguments had taken place between the two great socialist leaders.

During a brief stay in Paris in the second half of June (1905), I naturally also had lengthy conversations with Armand Lévy, as well as with Gaston Calmette and Betzold. I did not, however, see Prime Minister Rouvier, as he was ill at the time.

I had barely returned to London when I suddenly received a telegram from Armand Lévy, informing me that he would arrive in London the following morning to speak with me on Rouvier's behalf. When I showed this telegram to some mutual friends of Armand Lévy and me, they laughed and said it must be a joke, because to their knowledge, it had never happened before that Armand Lévy had agreed to undertake a night-time journey, and especially across the Channel, which he found so dreadful! Indeed, no one could have claimed that Armand Lévy was ever a passionate sailor, but not only that; the thought of traveling by train at night, possibly sleeping in a cramped sleeping compartment, was considered an impossibility for him. How often have I heard him mock his friends, who were traveling at night on a luxury train from Paris to Monte Carlo, remarking that paying 300 francs to sleep in a drawer was one of the greatest modern follies. The only trip he took in July each year was to the seaside resort of Trouville, just a few hours from Paris. Preparations for this trip took at least four weeks, and his old valet, a character like himself, was kept busy during this time, packing the many suitcases and making other carefully considered arrangements in time. Armand Lévy was the true type of Parisian boulevardier in the good sense of the word, from the time of the Second Empire, a type that is probably hard to find today. In fact, to the astonishment of all his friends, he arrived in London alive, accompanied by his valet. When I greeted him at Victoria Station, he was in a truly heartbreaking state. Both he and his valet told gruesome stories about the terrible dangers they had faced during the night crossing on stormy seas

between Calais and Dover. We then drove to the Carlton Hotel, where rooms had been reserved for him, and he went straight to bed. When we had breakfast together at 2 a.m., he had recovered from the exertions of his night's journey and was in excellent spirits.

Armand Lévy was not only an extremely witty and intelligent companion, but also a very subtle political mind, possessing great clarity and always a good sense of the situation. I have rarely met a politician who could summarize a political situation, either verbally or in writing, with such consistent clarity and such subtle nuances. It was therefore no wonder that he enjoyed great respect among his political friends in Paris and was sought after by them in difficult cases. Above all, it was the prudent Prime Minister Rouvier who unconditionally trusted the always accurate judgment of his friend Armand Lévy. During breakfast, he told me that, following our recent conversations in Paris, he had had a long conversation with Rouvier, and that Rouvier had urgently requested that he visit me immediately in London to persuade me to return to Berlin without delay and make a final, urgent attempt to persuade Prince Bülow to enter into direct negotiations with the French government, in order to achieve a Franco-German agreement not only on the Morocco question, but across the board, and thus to initiate lasting friendly relations between the two nations. Only in the most extreme case, and then solely to avoid war, would Rouvier agree to accept Germany's demand for a new settlement of affairs in Morocco through an international conference. In Rouvier's opinion, discussing such matters with Prince Radolin was no longer of any use, for the Prince was far too slow in grasping the situation and was evidently still completely under pressure from Holstein. What the latter was pursuing with his aggressive policy was more incomprehensible to Rouvier than ever. Unfortunately, public opinion in France was now beginning to react to the challenges of Holstein's policies. The incredible press campaign in Germany, led by Professor Schiemann under Holstein's aegis, had already had a very negative effect on the mentality of large, previously pro-German circles in France, and the Kaiser's undoubtedly considerable popularity was also declining sharply. Mr. Delcassé's Morocco policy had been almost universally disapproved of in France; he had been dismissed from the ministry and no longer had any say. However, if this provocative policy were continued in Germany, Mr. Delcassé and his chauvinistic friends would ultimately prevail in the long run. No one in Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin should harbor any illusions about the consequences. There was still time to reach an agreement with France and establish lasting, friendly relations between the two countries; But if this final moment were missed, the future development of events would likely take forms undesirable for either party; it was impossible

to imagine what might happen, if not now, then certainly in the future. Above all, it was necessary to calm public opinion in France as quickly as possible. A single amiable gesture from the Emperor could currently achieve this effect.

I replied to Armand Lévy that, based on my recent observations in Berlin, it seemed useless for me to travel to Berlin again, especially since Holstein's personal irritation toward me had reached such a level that I would hardly be able to appear at the Foreign Office or before the Chancellor. In return, I was willing to convey any wishes Rouvier might have to Berlin in writing. Furthermore, I could also give him the happy news that a more peaceful mood seemed to have suddenly taken hold in Berlin. The military attaché, Count Schulenburg, had just returned from Berlin and informed me that, in the face of Holstein's warmongering, reason was beginning to prevail in influential government circles.

The day after Armand Lévy's return to Paris, I received the following letter, which he had addressed to me after a conversation with Prime Minister Rouvier for forwarding to the Foreign Office in Berlin. Here is the text of this letter:

(Ed. The following translated from the French)

Paris, June 26, 1905

Baron von ECKARDSTEIN,

London

My dear Baron,

I saw the President of the Council, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today, to whom I reported our conversation of Saturday. I informed him of the assurances of peace that your military attaché had brought back from Berlin, and of his conviction that an arrangement would be reached soon. I faithfully reproduced for him the observations I had made in response to these assurances, asking him if he disapproved of them. He replied that he found them very just, and that he was especially surprised that people in Germany refused to understand that he was not a personal power, that he was obliged, given the Constitution of our country, to take public opinion into account, and that he could not risk making arrangements that would not be ratified by it.

He readily believes that Germany, no more than France, will commit the folly of going to war over Morocco. But the fact remains that the Emperor asks us, or has us asked, to go to a Conference (which is absolutely the same thing), and thus undoes in a word all the arrangements made. Although this is the result of Mr. Delcassé's policy, which everyone in France disapproves of, it is nonetheless an unpleasant thing. Despite this, to show Germany our good will, the Government is quite willing to go to the Conference. He only asks that things be made easy for him by defining certain points in advance, so as to satisfy public opinion, and to avoid that, once the Moroccan affair is over, there remains in France a malaise and a spirit of resentment which would further delay the rapprochement that the two countries desire.

This is the summary of my conversation with Mr. Rouvier.

Allow me now, my dear Baron, to remind you of the terms of the conversation we had on Saturday at the Carlton. It is understood that I am now giving you my personal opinion, which is in no way official, but it nevertheless has the value of reflecting public opinion, because an old Parisian like me, who has been in contact for 30 years with all our politicians, all our major newspaper editors, numerous figures in high finance, and almost all classes of society, is perfectly aware of what can be done and asked of his country.

As I told you, for many years, I, who adore my country, thought it was in its interest to establish friendly relations with Germany. I was convinced that this was the best demonstration of patriotism. Many French people thought this way. Unfortunately, the majority of our nationals understood patriotism differently; they could not bring themselves to forget and pursued the chimera of sterile demands. This state of mind has changed considerably in recent years. Relations between Germans and French have become friendly. This winter, a play was performed with German uniforms, which was a great success. It was at this time that the intervention of the German Emperor in Morocco occurred. An intervention that stunned public opinion, because it knew nothing of Mr. Delcassé's actions. As soon as it learned of them, it immediately found our Minister of Foreign Affairs wrong, and you could read every day in the newspapers about a campaign directed against him. Despite this, out of respect for past services, the government did not want to immediately part ways with this dangerous colleague. This has been done today. How can one maintain that nothing has changed in the government's policy?

In place of Mr. Delcassé, you have Mr. Rouvier, whose long career in power provides you with reliable information about his feelings, which are shared by the entire Cabinet. Thus, I could not help but express my astonishment when you assured me that the greatest desire of the German Emperor and Prince Bülow was to maintain friendly relations with France.

So why let public opinion become angry and sour here?

The question is so simple. The Emperor wants a Conference. You will recognize that it is always unpleasant to go back on everything we have done for many months. Despite this, since we recognize the faults of our previous minister, we are willing to go there, on the condition, however, that it does not end in failure—and for it not to end in failure, we must agree on two or three main points with Germany. Frankly, my dear Baron, admit that this is asking very little of a country that demands so much, and that we French, who are not privy to the secrets of diplomacy, have every right to believe that the German Emperor is far more interested in teaching us a lesson than in gaining our friendship. For when you want people's friendship, you start by making them love you instead of teasing them.

I repeat what I have told you on several occasions. The moment is psychological. Right now, a gracious attitude, an elegant gesture from the German Emperor, and France will be very grateful, and our government will have nothing to do to bring about the much-desired rapprochement.

Try, my dear Baron, to ensure these views prevail in Berlin, and you will have accomplished a good deed and a good act for both our countries.

Best regards,
Armand Lévy

Shortly after receiving this letter, which contains a word-for-word, extremely precise account of the current state of the Moroccan crisis as well as general Franco-German relations, I went to the German Embassy and presented a copy there, requesting that it be forwarded to the Foreign Office in Berlin as soon as possible, by any safe opportunity. I further decided to take the bull by the horns and write directly to Holstein, referring to the aforementioned letter from Paris. Here is the text:

London, June 28, 1905

Your Excellency

I have the honour to inform you that I have presented to the German Embassy a copy of a letter for forwarding to the Foreign Office, which I received yesterday from Paris from Mr. Armand Lévy, an intimate friend of Prime Minister Rouvier. As Your Excellency will see from this letter, Mr. Rouvier, in order to show us goodwill, is now prepared, albeit extremely reluctantly, to accede to the Imperial Government's demand for a new international conference on Morocco. However, the French Prime Minister is very anxious that the Imperial Government, after he has shown this goodwill, facilitate the implementation of any conference program as much as possible by attempting to reach agreement on all the main points through direct negotiations between the two governments before the conference convenes. Mr. Rouvier is equally anxious that a form of settlement of the individual questions be found which, after all that has happened, would not leave any discontent or resentment against Germany in French public opinion. Mr. Rouvier is of the opinion that it would be madness for Germany and France to wage war over Morocco. He also hopes that people in Germany will understand that it is not within their own power to make agreements that public opinion in France would reject and that therefore could not be ratified, even though Mr. Delcassé's policy has met with almost universal disapproval in France.

Furthermore, I have the honour to draw Your Excellency's special attention to the remarks that Mr. Armand Lévy, after consulting with the Prime Minister, made in his letter to me regarding the importance of a general Franco-German rapprochement and the establishment of lasting friendly relations between the two countries. Although the author of the letter describes these observations as his personal opinion, I cannot help but emphasize that Mr. Rouvier, in the long personal discussions I have had with him, has expressed exactly the same views, if not even far-reaching projects, regarding the future development of relations between the two nations. I have not the slightest doubt that Mr. Rouvier, as well as his current cabinet colleagues, mean this openly and honestly. The same applies to little Betzold, whose judgment, as far as I know, Your Excellency has always placed great value on. Besides the current threat of war brought about by the Moroccan crisis, Mr. Rouvier fears nothing more than a future, acute resurgence of French chauvinism, which, fortunately for the world, has declined so sharply in the last ten years, but has been given new impetus by the current, artificially created crisis and recent events.

Although I have heard from various impeccable sources that Your Excellency has been in a very irritable—to me completely incomprehensible—state of mind toward me for some time, I nevertheless consider it my duty to speak frankly about my views on the current world situation and the dangers threatening the German Empire. Mindful of our many years of cooperation in the interest of our fatherland, I hope Your Excellency will not resent me if I do not hold back my criticism of the Imperial Government's foreign policy. I am well aware that I am far from possessing the political acumen and the extensive experience that Your Excellency possesses, but I do have a nose, and, as Your Excellency himself will have to admit, this has unfortunately never deceived me in my foresight of international political events and developments. To avoid any misunderstandings, I would like to emphasize that I am not particularly proud of my nose. I am well aware that I am no infallible saint and will hardly ever claim that title. I would only like to take credit for one thing: that I never approach the assessment of political issues with preconceived opinions, but rather let my nose guide me step by step.

The isolation into which Germany has fallen and is falling more and more every day is certainly not a particularly pleasant fact for us; but anyone who has witnessed the developments in the international situation behind the scenes in recent years and still has their wits about them should have no doubt that none other than ourselves are to blame. Instead of responding to England's willingness to form an alliance with us at the appropriate time, we have completely botched things, and through Tirpitz's adventurous, aggressive naval policy, we are driving the English ever further into the hands of the French and Russians. Conversely, we are driving France, with which we have fortunately achieved more normal relations than ever before for several years, into the hands of England, particularly through our current Moroccan action, and artificially reviving French chauvinism, which has declined sharply over the past decade. Italy, which, as a result of the growing antagonism between us and England, no longer counts on the protection of its maritime interests in the Mediterranean by the English fleet, is daily aligning itself more closely with France under the aegis of Mr. Barrère. And Russia? I can hardly imagine that anyone in Berlin seriously believes that Germany can ever expect anything from the Muscovites, except perhaps the Cossack whip! I must frankly confess that the downright unworthy following of Russia, which we have systematically pursued since the beginning of the Japanese War, fills me with great concern for the future. Does anyone in Berlin believe that the Russians will keep quiet? On the contrary, they are using, as they always have in the past, all the advances made to them from Berlin to cast suspicion on our policies in London and Paris. Only a few weeks ago, I was able

to gather most definitely from King Edward's statements to me that St. Petersburg is engaging in the most extensive indiscretions about our continued demarches there, both to the King himself and to the English government.

That the overall world situation is becoming more unfavourable for us every day, and that the process of isolating Germany, initiated through our own fault, is spreading ever further, is an undeniable fact that nothing can conceal. But whether a preventive war against France, as Your Excellency seems to intend, is the appropriate means of escaping this isolation seems more than doubtful to me. That such a war could not remain localized but would rather result in a general catastrophe for Europe and ourselves, can hardly be beyond doubt. Certainly, the Battle of Mukden has been won, and Russia has been temporarily militarily paralysed by the otherwise unfortunate outcome of the Japanese War and the revival of the revolution. Compared to France alone, we therefore possess a considerable military superiority, but what about England? Perhaps the Chancellor, who just a few weeks ago refused to believe me that England would definitely actively side with France in the event of war, has now also been convinced of the correctness of my assertion, for, as far as I know, the Imperial Government in Berlin was recently officially informed of this by the English! Thus, in the event of war, we would irretrievably lose all our colonial possessions; our merchant fleet, perhaps also our war fleet, would be swept away by the sea; and our maritime trade, which, to my knowledge, currently amounts to approximately 25 percent of our total trade, would be destroyed for at least several generations, if not forever. As I know, Your Excellency has for some time now had Professor Schiemann and other publicists promote the theory in the German press that we would have to seek compensation from France for everything we would lose at the hands of England in the event of war. But this calculation, too, is fundamentally wrong. I have not the slightest doubt that America would eventually side against us and expel us from France. I am firmly convinced that public opinion in America would compel its government to do so, quite apart from the fact that Theodore Roosevelt, despite the Monroe Doctrine, would hardly miss an opportunity to satisfy his martial urge on European soil. And then what? Moreover, if we acted as aggressors, we would have the public opinion of the entire world against us, even among our own allies, who would be standing by and watching. This would certainly be the case in Italy, but probably a considerable portion of public opinion would also side with us in Austria-Hungary. Above all, however, there would not be the slightest willingness to fight in Germany itself. Quite apart from the fact that, as Your Excellency must know, the Kaiser does not desire war under any circumstances, the vast majority of the German people would not understand the necessity of war. Due to the legal

interpretation of certain paragraphs of the Madrid-Morocco Convention of 1880, no enthusiasm for fighting can be generated among the German people. Only when the German is attacked, or believes someone is out to get him, does his fighting spirit awaken, and the true furor teutonicus only when the steel is embedded several centimeters deep in his flesh. Thus, in brief, any thought of a preventive war against France is a monstrosity from the outset, and carrying out this idea could, in the long run, result in nothing but a massive catastrophe for ourselves. The only war we will one day absolutely have to fight is against the ever-growing tide of Russian imperialism and Pan-Slavism; for this, however, we need England's backing. Unfortunately, the Kaiser and Tirpitz are increasingly betting on the wrong horse with their noisy naval policy. Instead of limiting ourselves to building a fleet primarily for defensive purposes, we squander our money on adventurous ideas of world conquest, chasing a fantastic goal that we will never be able to achieve due to our geographical location. In doing so, we neglect our land-based armaments, which are absolutely necessary for our survival, because the fleet, with its insatiable stomach, devours ever larger sums from year to year, never to be seen again. Where this kind of policy will one day lead, only the gods know!

To return to the current Moroccan crisis after these general considerations, I would first like to emphasize that I did everything in my power to persuade Prime Minister Rouvier to accept the conference plan so categorically demanded by the Imperial Government; this goal has now been achieved. Unfortunately, however, I cannot avoid emphasizing that my efforts in this direction were fundamentally contrary to my own opinion. What good could come of such a conference for Germany is truly incomprehensible to me. To speak frankly, I fear that Your Excellency and the Chancellor are gravely mistaken in assuming that we would emerge victorious from such an international conference. During my conversation with the Chancellor on the 5th of August, M. in Karlsruhe, the contents of which, I believe, are known to Your Excellency, I have not failed to draw his attention to the fact that at such a conference, not England and France would be isolated, as he himself seemed to believe, but that we, and no one else but ourselves, would be the tainted Europeans. But not only that. At such a conference, nothing else can come of it for us than that we have our isolation officially attested to before the whole world, and that the ring of the coalition forming against us is finally closed and sealed. Do Your Excellency and the Reich Chancellor really still believe that Russia will side with us at such a conference as a debt of gratitude for our attitude during the Japanese War? But not only is Russia likely to side with France and England with all determination, but we are unlikely to experience much joy with our own ally either. Just like

Russia and all the other participating states, both large and small, Italy will also side with France and England at such a conference, and even Austria will seek to play a more or less soft-spoken mediating role. It would be difficult for me to substantiate these predictions with logical reasoning; in this case, I'm simply following my own instincts. I would be delighted if they were to deceive me this time, but I fear they will be right again.

Just as the idea of a preventive war is entirely reprehensible, I also consider the rigid adherence to the conference idea to be wrong and directly contrary to our true interests.

There is only one way out of the impasse we have found ourselves in as a result of the Moroccan crisis we ourselves have brought upon ourselves, as well as from the rapidly developing process of isolation. This is to take the hand offered to us by Mr. Rouvier, to enter into direct negotiations with the French Cabinet, which, in order to reach an agreement with us and for reasons of domestic policy, has disembarked the chauvinist Delcassé, and to seek, along the whole line, a compromise satisfactory to both sides. But time is pressing; what would be absolutely possible today may be impossible in a very short time. Since our foreign policy has allowed so many favourable opportunities to pass unused in recent years, I implore Your Excellency, in the interest of our fatherland, not to miss this perhaps last opportunity that presents itself to us, but to act as quickly as possible. The psychological moment is still there today at the twelfth hour; if we miss it, it will most likely never return.

Hoping that Your Excellency will not resent my perhaps overly frank language and will correctly assess the reasons that prompted me to write this,

attention, Your Excellency,

ever devoted,
Eckardstein

P.S. June 29, 1905

I forgot to mention in my letter that, as I have learned from a primary source, General Sir John French, who distinguished himself so much in the Boer War, accompanied by several officers from the Intelligence Department of the War Office, is traveling to France to undertake an inspection tour of the Meuse River in association with French General Staff officers. This should be another,

unmistakable, indication of how the wind is actually blowing here. I am sending this letter to Your Excellency through a very reliable opportunity. A German merchant I know is traveling to Berlin this evening and will take the letter with him. He is a thoroughly reliable person and served as deputy consul in South America for several years. As Your Excellency will see, the letter is also firmly sealed. I instructed the bearer to hand the letter to the clerk on duty at the door of Your Excellency in Foreign Affairs and to ensure that it is immediately delivered to Your Excellency so that it does not fall into the wrong hands.

When I confidentially showed a copy of this letter to Dr. Hans Esser, the representative of the Kölnische Zeitung, not long afterward, he laughed heartily and said that my language had perhaps been too temperamental, but that he completely agreed with the statements contained in the letter. He was only afraid that Holstein had developed gallstones after receiving my letter, if he hadn't already had them. He advised me to send a copy of the letter as soon as possible to Holstein's antipode, State Secretary Baron von Richthofen. But since I happened to know that he wasn't in Berlin at the time, I refrained from doing so.

When I visited the Secretary of State in Berlin in the fall, he told me, among other things, that a few people in the office who were in the know were saying that Holstein had initially been terribly agitated after receiving my letter, but then had immediately lost his voice. The Secretary of State asked me to provide him with a copy of the letter. When I brought it to him the following day, he initially shook with laughter as he read it, but then remarked that only now did he understand why Holstein had so suddenly retracted his horns and then embarked on a several-week vacation to the Harz Mountains. Unfortunately, however, the psychological moment to reach an agreement with France across the board had indeed been missed. An icy atmosphere was now blowing against us in Paris. Ambassador Dr. Rosen had indeed done his best to set everything right during his special mission to Paris in September, but what could have been easily achieved just a few weeks earlier was, of course, no longer possible by this time. Fortunately, the Chancellor is now finally beginning to realize what Holstein had brought upon himself and the German Empire, but unfortunately too late.

During this conversation with Baron von Richthofen (at the end of October 1905), I learned, among other things, for the first time about the so-called Björkö Treaty between Wilhelm II and Nicholas II, which was primarily directed against England and was concluded on July 24, 1905, without the knowledge of the

responsible Chancellor and the Foreign Office, but soon after had to be abandoned due to its absurdity. The State Secretary confided in me that it had taken him great effort to persuade the Chancellor to raise the cabinet question and submit his resignation in order to revoke this treaty, which had been formulated in Russia's entirely one-sided interest. On the other hand, the leading statesmen in Petersburg had also declared that the treaty could obviously not be valid against France, and thus this document, a less than laudable showcase of the Emperor's statesmanship, had finally been swept under the carpet. This was further proof that the Emperor had not yet grasped the entire current world situation and, especially with regard to Russia, was still wallowing in illusions that could have the most dangerous consequences for the German Empire. On the other hand, it was also outrageous that the Emperor was continually kept in the dark about the true facts instead of being told the truth. For example, he considered the Moroccan crisis to be over long ago. The directly criminal warmongering of Holstein had not yet even entered the mind of the Emperor, who was not even thinking about war. Nor had he been informed of the undoubtedly sincere, general, friendly attempts by Prime Minister Rouvier and his entire cabinet to initiate negotiations. The Rouvier cabinet was certainly more capable of preventing a resurgence of chauvinism in France than the Tsar of Russia. Moreover, it was naive to say the least to believe that Russian statesmen were interested in curbing French chauvinism. Politically and economically, it was only in Russia's interest for chauvinism to reach its peak in France. How else could Count Witte extract billions more from France through loans? Also incomprehensible was the incredible folly of Prince Radolin, who, during Count Witte's recent stay in Paris on his return from the Russo-Japanese peace negotiations in Portsmouth, asked him to intervene on Germany's behalf in the Moroccan affair. In doing so, Prince Radolin had just chosen the right man, that is to say, the goat was used as a gardener.

Since this conversation, I have never seen State Secretary Baron von Richthofen again. He already appeared to be suffering greatly at the time and died a few months later (in January 1906). His death affected me deeply, for he was in every respect a very amiable and benevolent superior, and I had always been on the most friendly terms with him. He was an extremely diligent and conscientious worker, yet not the least bit burdened by any bureaucratic conceit or other characteristics inherent in bureaucrats, such as stubbornness, bias, and legalistic phraseology. He had lived in many countries, was a thoroughly cosmopolitan, and knew full well that nothing can be achieved with preconceived opinions, especially in international matters. In the political sphere, he possessed a strongly developed sense of reality and a quick grasp of things. Unfortunately,

the political circumstances of the time, as well as the prevailing conditions in the Foreign Office, meant that in most cases, his entirely reasonable views were ineffective. Holstein stood in the way everywhere. Due to the considerable influence he was able to exert over the Chancellor, he held a virtually dictatorial position in his capacity as Director of the Political Department. There can be no doubt that Holstein, whose sensitivity and suspicious eccentricity had rapidly increased over the years, was no longer mentally competent at the time of the Moroccan crisis of 1905. Sufficient hints of his abnormal mental state can already be found in the 1918 work "On the Prehistory of the World War" by Privy Councillor Otto Hammann. Among other things, the author reports that in April 1905, he had a heated disagreement with Holstein because the latter had insisted that the unofficial "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" include a threat of war against France in the newly begun conflict with the Sultan of Morocco. However, an article to this effect was ultimately omitted at the instigation of the Reich Chancellor.

In the spring of 1906, Prince Bülow finally decided to separate from Holstein for good. But all the many follies that were so disastrous for Germany's future had already happened. It was too late!

After a preliminary protocol on Morocco had been concluded between Germany and France on 8 July 1905, without, however, any agreement being reached in advance on the main points of the conference programme, as Rouvier had wished, the international Moroccan conference, so categorically demanded by Prince Bülow and Holstein, met in Algeciras on 16 January 1906.

Everything I had verbally predicted to Prince Bülow on May 5 (1905) in Karlsruhe and written to Holstein on June 28 came true at this conference. Unfortunately, my nose had been right about the artificially concocted calculations in the bureaucratic atmosphere of Wilhelmstrasse.

One of the greatest follies committed there, among many others, was the belief that something could be achieved by adopting the position of negotiating directly only with the Sultan of Morocco. A similarly ridiculous folly was committed in another matter, namely the Baghdad Railway project. It was believed that through direct negotiations with the Sheikh of Kuwait, as the terminus of the Baghdad Railway, a port on the Persian Gulf could be secured, without worrying about the fact that this Sheikh had long since been bound to England by treaties. One could certainly negotiate with England through the Sheikh of Kuwait, whose country is roughly the size of Berlin's Tiergarten, but

certainly not with the Sheikh of Kuwait about vital issues of the British Empire. Likewise, one could negotiate with France about Morocco, but not with a shadow king like the Sultan about the French colonial empire. [1)]

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1) Dr. Friedrich Rosen, who was then appointed Ambassador to Morocco and now holds the post of Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressed himself along the same lines.

To go into the Algeciras Conference itself and everything connected with it would take us too far at this point. It should only be emphasized once again that Germany was completely isolated at the conference. Even Austria, which Wilhelm II later famously described in one of his ill-fated telegrams as Germany's only "brilliant" second in Algeciras, played a rather timid role there.

At this memorable Algeciras Conference, which Prince Bülow later successfully had his official press department praise as one of the greatest triumphs in German history to the uncritical public in Germany, the coalition process that had been underway against Germany since the rejection of alliance possibilities with England and Japan in 1901 finally closed, and the result was the World War. Furthermore, hardly anything contributed more to accelerating Germany's isolation than Wilhelm II's ostentatious and foolish pursuit of the phantom of the alleged "traditional friendship between the Houses of Hohenzollern and Romanov." Indeed, this much-vaunted traditional friendship expressed itself in the fact that Nicholas II, or rather his advisors, sought to draw England over to the Dual Alliance of Russia and France through systematically deliberate indiscretions about Wilhelm II's continued advances. Thus, it wasn't long before King Edward learned of the Björkö Treaty, which was primarily directed against the British Empire. In the first volume of my "Memoirs," I already mentioned that, after learning of this memorable treaty, King Edward, in private, referred to his nephew William II as "the most brilliant failure in history."

Chapter VIII.

Anyone who writes the history of the follies of German politics since Bismarck's dismissal, and to a certain extent also since Count Caprivi's resignation, is unfortunately writing the history of German politics. To discuss all the perversities committed by German diplomacy in the period between the Algeciras Conference and the outbreak of the World War would fill at least another volume. I will therefore refrain from doing so for the time being and limit myself to recounting a conversation I had in 1911 with President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt, as well as a conversation with the German Crown Prince and the Chief of the General Staff, General Count Moltke, shortly before the outbreak of the World War. Much of what is contained therein may be of current interest today.

I had already met President Theodore Roosevelt in 1889, when I was attached to the Legation in Washington (the German Mission in America was only elevated to an embassy in the first half of the 1990s). Theodore Roosevelt was less prominent politically at that time, but he was generally known as a passionate "big game shot," i.e., a hunter of American big game such as bear, buffalo, elk, etc. He often came to Washington from New York at that time, and I met him for the first time at the Metropolitan Club there. In the following years, I spent a lot of time with him in New York clubs and had many interesting conversations with him. If he developed a certain affection for me, I feel the main reason for this was that I was a patient listener to his perhaps often overly long hunting stories from the Wild West. When I travelled from Berlin to America in the summer of 1893 for the World's Fair in Chicago, I visited him in New York and also spent a few days with him in Buffalo. But I didn't see him again until 1911, because I hadn't been to America during his entire presidency, from 1901 to 1909.

After the end of his last presidential term in 1909, Theodore Roosevelt undertook an extended hunting trip to Africa. Following this, he visited most European countries in 1910. In May of that year, he also spent several days in Berlin and Potsdam as a guest of the Kaiser.

After returning to New York, he occupied himself with the publication of the magazine "The Outlook," and it was on the editorial board of this paper that I visited him in 1911. We had barely greeted each other when he immediately began to talk about his previous year's stay in Berlin and Potsdam. "Your

Emperor is a fine fellow, I like him, he has given me a jolly good time in Berlin and Potsdam," [1] said Theodore Roosevelt. When the former president uttered this remark, I could not help but think of a perhaps somewhat malicious, but extremely witty remark by the then very well-known American statesman, Senator Chauncey Depew. In 1902, when a long exchange of dispatches took place between the Kaiser and President Roosevelt on the occasion of the christening of the imperial racing yacht "Meteor," built in America, I was visiting an English country estate with Chauncey Depew. During the evening meal, the American senator made the following remark in private: "The Emperor and Theodore Roosevelt are in many respects very much alike. If either of them goes to a Christening he wants to be the nouveau né [2], if he goes to a wedding he wants to be the bride, and if he attends a funeral he wants to be the corpse." [3]

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1) Your Emperor is a fine fellow, I like him; he gave me many a good day in Berlin and Potsdam.

2) "Nouveau né" is the French term for "newborn."

During our conversation, which lasted more than an hour, Theodore Roosevelt recounted some very interesting observations he had made in the various colonies of East Africa. He then spoke about the Russo-Japanese Peace of Portsmouth, which, as is well known, had been concluded under his auspices in 1905. Finally, he spoke in detail about the Moroccan Crisis of 1905 and the Algeciras Conference that resulted from it. Regarding the conference itself, he stated that it had ended in a major diplomatic defeat for Germany. This, however, should have been foreseen in Berlin, and he found it incomprehensible how the German government could have made the mistake of insisting on holding such a conference. The outcome of the Algeciras Conference had severely damaged German prestige in every country in the world.

During our conversation, which lasted more than an hour, Theodore Roosevelt told me about some very interesting observations he had made in the various colonies of East Africa, then on to talk about the Russo-Japanese Peace of Portsmouth, which, as is well known, had come about under his aegis in 1905, and finally spoke at length about the Moroccan crisis of 1905 and the Algeciras Conference that had resulted from it. As far as the conference itself was concerned he said that it had ended in a major diplomatic defeat for Germany. However, this should have been foreseen in Berlin and he could not understand how the German government could have made the mistake of insisting on such a

conference. As a result of the outcome of the Algeciras Conference, Germany's prestige had suffered enormously in all countries around the world.

The former president made the following statement about the threat of war resulting from the Moroccan crisis in the spring and summer of 1905: "Supposing the German armies had overrun France, we in America would not have kept quiet. I certainly would have found myself compelled to interfere." In response to my question as to how this view could be reconciled with the Monroe Doctrine, which, as far as I knew, included the principle of American non-interference in European affairs, Theodore Roosevelt replied: "As long as England succeeds in keeping up the balance of power in Europe, not only on principle, but in reality, well and good; should she however for some reason or other fail in doing so, the United States would be obliged to step in at least temporally, in order to reestablish the balance of power in Europe, never mind against which country or group of countries our efforts may have to be directed. In fact we ourselves are becoming, owing to our strength and geographical situation, more and more the balance of power of the whole globe."

Already during the Moroccan crisis in the spring of 1905, several well-known American politicians who were in London at the time had expressed similar sentiments to me and many others.

I myself stand firmly on the ground of the new form of government created in the German Reich by the force of events. I openly declare my support for the Republic.

Any violent attempt to overthrow the new form of government that now exists, no matter from which side it might come, would not only represent boundless stupidity, but above all a crime against the German people, who have already been so severely tested.

I make this point in advance to avoid any misunderstandings when I speak of the former German Crown Prince. It is only from the standpoint of human justice and in the interest of historical truth that I cannot avoid countering the many misconceptions and legends that have arisen about the Crown Prince. The view is almost universally held that the Crown Prince was one of the worst warmongers in 1914. I can assure you with absolute certainty that this assumption is entirely erroneous. On the contrary, few people have more accurately recognized the

political and military world situation at that time and seen the future more clearly than the Crown Prince. Had he had any say at all at that time, and had certain people in positions of responsibility listened to him, the outbreak of war might have been avoided altogether, or at least the world war would not have been blundered into in such a boundlessly clumsy and foolish manner as happened under the aegis of Herr von Bethmann, State Secretary Gottlieb von Jagow, and many other similar political "non-values."

It cannot be denied that the Crown Prince, in his youthful inexperience, often showed insufficient restraint in speech and writing and, at times, disregarding his prominent position, lacked the "esprit de conduite." When war broke out in August 1914, however, he had matured into a man and possessed a thoroughly sound political judgment, supported by an always correct political intuition.

In May 1914, the Crown Prince participated in a General Staff tour to the Vosges Mountains under the personal leadership of the Chief of the General Staff, Count Moltke, and spent the Whitsun holidays, which fell right in the middle of this tour, in Baden-Baden with all the General Staff officers involved. By chance, I was in Baden-Baden at that time and had a lengthy conversation with him on Whitsun Sunday, May 31, at Messmer's Hotel, where the Crown Prince was staying. Several years had passed since then without my meeting the Crown Prince again. Apart from fleeting encounters at court festivities in Berlin, I had actually only met him when he came to England in January 1901 for the funeral ceremonies for the late Queen Victoria. He was only 18 at the time and a complete unknown. King Edward, who always had great affection for his great-nephew, invested him with the Order of the Garter at Osborne Castle on the Isle of Wight around this time and delivered a speech on the occasion in extremely heartfelt terms. In the late summer of the same year (1901), the Crown Prince, accompanied by the then Colonel von Pritzelwitz, came to England for the second time to travel around and get to know the country and its people. On this occasion, I met him repeatedly, both in London and at various English country estates where he was invited as a guest. Naturally, due to his youth, he still showed little interest in political matters at that time.

During our conversation on May 31, 1914, in Baden-Baden, the Crown Prince immediately addressed the world political situation, which, as he expressed it, greatly worried and preoccupied him. There was no longer any doubt that the Russians were continuing to move massive numbers of troops to the German and Austrian borders. Whether this was merely a test mobilization or whether there were actually serious war intentions in Petersburg at the time was a

matter of sharp disagreement in Berlin. It was very difficult for him, the Crown Prince, to form a correct picture of the situation, because the opinions prevailing in Wilhelmstrasse were in no way in line with the views of the Great General Staff. Discussing the situation with the Chancellor was almost impossible, because Herr von Bethmann remained completely politically clueless, had no idea what was at stake, and was letting himself be carried along by events without being able to reach a decision in any direction. To him, the Crown Prince, it seemed extremely risky to allow things to continue under the prevailing circumstances; something must be done, absolutely, to stem the general trend in Europe, which was undoubtedly moving in a warlike direction, through skillful intervention by our diplomacy. The current political situation does not allow Germany to even enter into war, for in fact we are completely isolated and, in the event of war, we would be left alone with Austria. He first became fully aware of Germany's isolation during an official visit to the Romanian royal court in Bucharest. During the few days he spent there as a guest of the court, he instinctively sensed that a radical shift to the detriment of Germany and Austria had taken place, both at court and in government circles, and that Romania's foreign policy was moving entirely in Russia's wake. He was therefore firmly convinced that in the event of war, Romania would at least ignore its alliance obligations, if not fight directly on Russia's side. He, the Crown Prince, had communicated his observations in Bucharest to State Secretary von Kiderlen-Wächter. But he wrinkled his thick nose and declared that he, Kiderlen, had become convinced during his years as ambassador in Bucharest that Romania's defection from the Triple Alliance to the Russian side was out of the question once and for all!

As the conversation continued, the Crown Prince told me that he had recently had a discussion with the State Secretary of the Foreign Office, Gottlieb von Jagow. He had given him a long theoretical lecture on the world situation and Germany's position among the powers. On this occasion, however, Herr von Jagow had talked so much nonsense that he, the Crown Prince, was still reeling from it. The only positive thing he believed he could glean from this conversation was the fact that Herr von Jagow viewed the world situation as extremely peaceful and saw hardly a cloud on the horizon of international politics. "That might be a small misunderstanding," I replied to the Crown Prince, and told him that this statesmanlike phenomenon, Gottlieb von Jagow, had already been nicknamed "the small misunderstanding" by his classmates at school in Ihlefeld.

That, on the threshold of World War II, the future of the German people, alongside the helpless and clueless Reich Chancellor Herr von Bethmann-

Hollweg, had to rest in the hands of this "minor misunderstanding," a personality who was as conceited as he was incompetent, and who, on top of that, possessed a dose of malice that would normally have been enough for a whole truckload of monkeys, is indeed a rare tragedy of fate.

After the Crown Prince had remarked that he considered the dispatch of a German military mission to Constantinople under the command of General Liman von Sanders to be a major mistake, since it would only needlessly provoke the Russians without gaining the slightest advantage for himself, he turned to Italy and asked me for my opinion on Italy's likely attitude in the event of war. I then explained to him the reasons why we could under no circumstances count on Italian support, and he fully agreed with my statements. When asked how England would behave in the event of war, I replied to the Crown Prince that, in my opinion, it would initially adopt a wait-and-see attitude, for the English people were currently averse to any adventurous military undertaking and longed for peace, if at all possible. However, if we were to violate Belgium's neutrality in the event of war and attempt to force a march through Belgian territory, no government in England would be in a position to remain passive. We would then have to be prepared with all certainty for an immediate declaration of war by England. "Well, then the whole thing is completely rotten from the start," the Crown Prince remarked. "What you say only strengthens my conviction that, in the current world situation, we are completely incapable of engaging in military entanglements with any prospect of ultimate success. I simply don't understand how there can be people who long for war, for we have nothing to gain from it, only everything to lose. Our diplomacy should therefore leave no means unused to get us out of this dangerous dilemma without war; I only fear it is too stupid and clumsy for that."

After I had informed the Crown Prince of the ongoing and recently intensified war-prone machinations of the Russian ambassador, Mr. Iswolsky, which had come to my attention during my recent stay in Paris from impeccable sources, including ambassadors of smaller neutral states, I mentioned the various secure alliance opportunities with England that our diplomats had so foolishly let pass by; as well as the follies of our Morocco campaign in 1905 and 1911, and especially the opportunity that presented itself to us in May and June 1905 and was also missed, to reach an understanding with France across the board with the Rouvier Cabinet. These facts were, of course, completely unknown to the Crown Prince, for it was obvious that neither Mr. von Bethmann nor the "small misunderstanding" would have informed him of them, even if they had ever grasped the infinite significance of these missed opportunities.

When I told him these facts, the Crown Prince was initially so surprised that he could hardly believe them. But after I had convinced him of their authenticity, he said that only now was it clear to him how Germany could have ended up in this dangerous isolation. Above all, he did not understand how Berlin could have rejected the various possibilities of an alliance with England. It was obvious, he argued, that an alliance with England offered the only guarantee of permanently maintaining world peace. The Crown Prince then turned to Lord Haldane's Berlin mission of April 1912 and spoke sharply about Messrs. von Bethmann and Kiderlen-Wächter, who had most clumsily botched this undoubtedly entirely honest last attempt by England to achieve a modus vivendi with Germany.

When the conversation turned to Austria, the Crown Prince commented as follows: "I don't understand at all why, for some time now, we have allowed ourselves to be completely led into Austria's tow in matters of foreign policy. The centre of gravity of our policy no longer seems to be in Berlin, but in Vienna. I have never trusted Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and I trust him less today than ever. I consider him a very unreliable cantonist and fear that one day he will drag us Germans into trouble with his dangerous, ambitious plans."

This conversation of mine with the Crown Prince took place, as I said, on May 31, 1914, exactly four weeks before the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Serajevo, which resulted in the ominous ultimatum to Serbia, the World War, and the general catastrophe.

To my knowledge, the Crown Prince expressed himself to the Reich Chancellor around the time of the ultimatum in the same vein as mentioned above, and urgently warned Mr. von Bethmann-Hollweg against undertaking anything himself or supporting any steps by Austria that could lead to military entanglements, since Germany's isolation and the current general world situation did not permit any involvement in war at all.

Given the Crown Prince's intelligence, it is hardly conceivable that he would indulge in illusions and offer his help to bring down the new form of government that had just been introduced in the German Empire, thereby plunging the German people into even greater misery than they had already suffered. On the whole, only stupidity that staggers from illusion to illusion is dangerous to the state; rarely, however, is intelligence that sees things as they really are and draws the correct conclusions from them.

The undeserved fate of the former Crown Prince, condemned to spend his life far from home on a desolate island, is and remains deeply tragic. He is condemned to spend his lonely and useless life, far from home, and is not even allowed to pursue his favourite sport, horse breeding, and cultivate his own land.

On Whit Monday, June 1, 1914, the day after my meeting with the Crown Prince, I had a lengthy conversation with the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel General von Moltke, who, like the Crown Prince, was staying at Messmer's Hotel in Baden-Baden during the Whitsun holidays. I had already known him in the early 1980s, when he was still a young captain in Potsdam. In April 1901, he came to London for a few days to show King Edward, on behalf of the Kaiser, some new uniforms and ceremonial items to be introduced into the German army. In my capacity as German Chargé d'Affaires, I had officially introduced him to the King, who, as I mentioned in Volume II of my memoirs, instructed me, among other things, to report to the Emperor that General von Moltke had made a particularly favourable impression on him. Since then, I had only met him briefly a few times at court festivities in Berlin.

The general, to whom I recounted my observations during my recent stay in Paris, particularly the high-pressure warlike machinations of the Russian ambassador, Mr. Isvolsky, listened to my explanations with great attention. After I had finished my presentation, he said the following verbatim: "What you have told me interests me immensely. If things finally boil over, we are ready; the sooner the better for us." I replied to the general that I could not imagine how we could even embark on a war at this time, since we and Austria were completely politically isolated and, in the event of war, would have almost the entire world against us. Furthermore, based on recent discussions with leading representatives of trade and industry, I hardly believed that we were economically ready. As Chief of the General Staff, he, of course, could only judge whether we were militarily ready. My personal view is that we must avoid anything that could even in any way involve us in military adventures. Above all, we must try to escape the dangerous isolation we have fallen into through our own fault, through skilful diplomatic measures. The Crown Prince, who expressed himself to me to this effect yesterday, shared exactly the same view.

The general seemed extremely astonished by my explanations and asked me what my pessimistic view of Germany's political isolation was based on. I then gave him a long lecture on the developments that the world situation had taken to Germany's disadvantage since 1901. Almost everything I told him seemed completely unknown to him, and he repeatedly shook his head in disbelief. When

I brought up Italy and explained to him why we could not count on its help in the event of war, he made a gesture with an unwilling expression on his face that meant something like, "You don't understand, I know better than you." [1]. When I asserted that if England were to violate our neutrality and force a march through Belgium, she would immediately declare war on us and support France not only by sea but also by land, he initially remained silent, but soon afterward made the following brief remark: "You are also mistaken about England; what she will do in the event of war, we can calmly wait and see." When the conversation turned to Russia, General von Moltke became quite agitated compared to his usually calm manner and said: "My greatest concern at the moment is Russia; we must be very careful that we are not presented with any sudden surprises from that corner of the world." In response to my remark that our highly wise diplomacy had always seen its only salvation in the much-vaunted "traditional" friendship with Russia, the general once again made a defensive gesture that meant something like, "I prefer not to enter into a discussion on this."

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1) General von Moltke probably believed he had Italy in his pocket because a new secret military convention had been concluded on March 10, 1914, according to which Italy committed itself to sending three army corps and two cavalry divisions to join the left wing of the German armies. However, he evidently had no thought at all about the political preconditions on which the Italian alliance, like the Triple Alliance in general, was based.

I couldn't exactly claim that this conversation with the Chief of the General Staff had calmed my concerns about the future of my fatherland or even satisfied me in the slightest. Certainly, General von Moltke was a man of noble character and always keen to do his duty to the utmost. Unfortunately, however, I couldn't help but note in my diary the evening after this conversation (June 1, 1914): "Belongs to the category of correct and limited."

Furthermore, my discussion with the Chief of the General Staff convinced me that there was almost no internal connection between the responsible political leadership in the German Reich and the military leadership on the threshold of the World War. Blinded by their own insanity, both the political and military leadership stumbled independently of one another, each in their own way, aimlessly and thoughtlessly into the great catastrophe.

Documents.

1904

1) Letter from Baron von Eckardstein to Baron Alfred Rothschild:

W. 13 Grosvenor Square
9th Jan. 1904

My dear Alfred,

Last night the Japanese Minister sent for me, as he had some important things to teil me. He told me, that according. to a message he had received from his Government, the Russian reply was as unsatisfactory to Japan as it possibly could be. The Cabinet in Tokio had therefore to consider which Steps to take next. They knew of course that nothing was left to them but to go to war. They would not like however, to have before the European public the odium of being the Agressors, and therefore might give Russia another short chance to reconsider their attitude and give a direct answer „Yes or No". He did not think of course for a moment that Russia would yield.

Continuing the Minister said, that the Russian Minister in Tokio Baron Rosen had insinuated to the Japanese Foreign Minister in delivering the Russian reply, that the sympathies of the whole of Europe would be in the case of war, on the side of Russia; that Germany and France would very likely give actual support to Russia and that even England was now trying to make up to Russia and had evidently the intention of leaving their Allies in the cold. Viscount Hayashi Said, he had just had a long interview with Lord Lansdowne, from whom he had received the most categorical assurance, that the Russian insinuations, as far as England were concerned, were nothing else but deliberate lies. The British Cabinet was determined to stick to their treaty Obligations to Japan and would refuse to join in a demarche of the Continental Powers to stop Japan going to war. Lord Lansdowne was also convinced that France would never give any actual Support to Russia in case of Hostilities breaking out.

With regard to Germany Viscount Hayashi asked me, if I thought that there was any possibility of truth in the Russian insinuations which had not

only been made by Baron Rosen in Tokio, but also by Count Lamsdorf to the Japanese Minister in Petersburg. I told Viscount Hayashi that he could take it from me, that the Russian insinuations with regard to Germany were nothing else but a bloody lie. The Minister asked me to telegraph to Berlin at once, and teil the German Government what had happened. He also wished me to ask Count Bülow to instruct if possible the German Minister in Tokio, to make at once to the Japanese Cabinet, an official statement to the effect, that Germany did not take any direct interest in the Manchurian and Korean questions, and would in case of war observe strict neutrality.

I have communicated the said message to Berlin, but have not had a reply yet. I hear on the very best authority that Russia has got at present coals in the Far East sufficient only for about four or five weeks, but that enormous quantities are on the way.

Believe me
yours very sincerely

Eckardstein

2) Letter from Baron Alfred Rothschild:

January 12th 1904

Marlborough Club,
Pall Mall. S. W.

Strictly confidential.

My dear Alfred,

The Japanese Minister told me this morning, that after the official declarations of Germany and the United States that they would observe strict neutrality* and the latter even a very benevolent neutrality, the Japanese Government were pushing on their war preparations as quick as possible and that within the next two weeks very likely over 100 thousand troops would have been landed in Korea. The Japanese Government would try however to avoid the outbreak of hostilities till the two new cruisers, which were bought

in Italy, had reached the Indian Ocean. On the 13th Oct. they were expected to arrive at Suez, where they would take in coal. Once arrived at the Red Sea and especially the Ocean, the Russian ships would never be able to catch them, as they were very much faster than the Russian ones. The Minister told me also, that the Japanese had given strong advice to the Chinese Government, to remain absolutely neutral, as otherwise Russia would be entitled to use Chinese ports and take coal there.

Believe me dear Alfred

yours very sincerely

Eckardstein

3) Note from Count Hayashi to Baron von Eckardstein (concerning Japanese note to Russia):

January 15th 1904

Reply courteous but firm no limit of time but shows decision to take active steps in case demands not complied or answer delayed.

Hayashi

4) Note from Count Hayashi to Baron von Eckardstein:

January 16th 1904

Can you not work through the continental press to say that the French are trying hard to preserve peace without regard to the honour or interest of the conflicting parties, because her people are the largest Russian bondholders and afraid of their depreciation.

That whatever language the French hold, they will withdraw from the struggle and keep neutrality when war breaks out?

Hayashi

Baron E.

5) Letter from Count Hayashi to Baron von Eckardstein (with the note that he was expecting him at 12 o'clock the next day to pick him up for a meeting with Baron Alfred Rothschild):

4, Grosvenor Gardens
London, S. W,
19th Jan. 1904

My dear Baron,

To-morrow 12 o'clock suits me very well, as you kindly offer to take me to the house of Baron Rothschild. I will expect you at this legation.

I am as yet without news.

Yours sincerely

Tadasu Hayashi

6) Letter from Count Hayashi to Baron von Eckardstein:

4, Grosvenor Gardens
London, S. W.
25th Jan. 1904

Dear Baron E.

I have no news as yet this morning to inform you.

You may rely upon me that I shall not fail to give you information when I have any.

Yours sincerely

Tadasu Hayashi

7) Excerpt from a letter from Mr. Armand Lévy, the friend of Prime Minister Rouvier, to Baron von Eckardstein (concerning a statement by Mr. Delcassé in the Council of Ministers about his efforts to prevent the outbreak of a Russo-Japanese war).

January 30 1904

Now that I've told you about myself, I can give you the statement Delcassé made today to the Council of Ministers. It is absolutely accurate.

As Delcassé told the Council that he still had confidence in peace, one of his colleagues asked him to clarify and explain on what he based such an optimistic opinion. Here is his verbatim statement: The Russian note contains such concessions, and there is such a difference between this note and the last one sent to Japan, that Japan would have to be crazy not to accept these conditions.

However, he added, I cannot answer that Japan is not crazy. But in the event that Japan does not accept Russia's response - I agree with the British Ambassador in asking the British Government to exert pressure on Japan as we exerted pressure on Russia - and if Japan did not want to listen to England, it would not yet be war - for I know that all the powers would intervene to try to make Japan see reason.

I am still, more than ever, optimistic about the Russia-Japan relationship. Don't think that Delcassé is an imbecile and that he only listens to the Russians.

He spends hours with the Japanese Minister and the British Ambassador.

You can be sure that at this time, America, England, and France are completely in agreement to end the war.

Armand Lévy

8) Letter from Lord W. Betzold to Baron von Eckardstein:

11, Rue de la Paix,
Paris, February 9, 1904

My dear Baron,

I apologize for dictating this letter in French, but it is impossible for me to write to you myself, suffering from rheumatic pain in my arm.

I confirm my dispatch in which I communicated to you the news of the naval battle, which you probably also heard in London.

We are very surprised here by the speed of the Japanese movements, which is reminiscent of our tactics of 1866; we did not officially declare war either, and we entered Hanover, Hesse, and other countries without formalities, except that our kind visit was announced within four hours.

The question now arises: would it be possible for the powers to intervene in favour of peace? This seems very unlikely! Will the war be short or long? It is feared to be long here, and it is not believed that Russia can remain defeated without losing its prestige as a great Asian power. What is your opinion on this subject?

Your most devoted
W. Betzold

Baron von Eckardstein,
London

9) Letter from Mr. W. Betzold to Baron von Eckardstein.

11, Rue de la Paix
Paris, 11 February 1904.

My dear Baron.

Thank you very much for your dispatch. Our friend in the Rue de Lille [1)] did not believe in war because Wilhelm Strasse and even those in high places believed in a peaceful solution right up to the last hour. The aged Field

Marshal Waldersee, on the other hand, had been a firm believer in war for months. You and he were right. Everything will now depend on whether the war will be long or short.

Always your own
W. Betzold

Baron von Eckardstein
15 Grosvenor Square
London

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1) The ambassador Prince Radolin.

10) Cipher telegram from Baron von Eckardstein to Paul von Schwabach.

February 20 1904

Schwabach,

Received your telegram, am in Cowes, but return London this afternoon. As far as I know, Russian Ambassador has travelled to Petersburg to see his son before leaving for the army in China. Today, upon my return, I will examine the situation closely and telegraph the result.

11) Cipher telegram from Baron von Eckardstein to Mr. Paul von Schwabach in response to a question that the latter had addressed to him on behalf of the Foreign Office.

23. February 1904

Schwabach, Berlin

I have investigated the matter carefully and have come to the definite conclusion that the Russian Ambassador only travelled to Petersburg on private business. At the reception the King made him some bland friendly

remarks about English neutrality and friendship for Russia, about which the Ambassador not pay much attention.

Further telegrams will follow.

Eckardstein

12) Letter from Mr. W. Betzold to Baron von Eckardstein.

11, Rue de la Paix
Paris, 29. February 1904

My dear Baron.

Thank you very much for your despatch to-day. I consider it my duty to write to you in strict confidence that Delcassé has today declared to his intimate friends that France can count on England, and I also hope that the other Powers will join in working for peace in Tokyo if the Japanese reject acceptable concessions which Russia might make, contrary to her expectations. Please have the goodness to check my information there and kindly telegraph me the result.

Always your own

W. Betzold

13) Cipher telegram from Baron von Eckardstein to Paul von Schwabach.

March 5 1904

Schwabach, Berlin

Russian ambassador, who has been received despite the King's indisposition, has presented him with a personal letter from the Emperor of Russia. The letter is very friendly. In it, the Emperor of Russia emphasizes that he fully believes in England's loyal neutrality and will not be put off by rumours to the contrary, which are evidently based on machinations.

Furthermore, a new exchange of letters has taken place in the last few days between the King of England and the President of the French Republic.

Eckardstein

14) Cipher-telegram from Baron von Eckardstein to Paul von Schwabach .

March 8 1904
Schwabach, Berlin

For some time now, agents of the Macedonian Committee have been working hard here to obtain funds for their own purposes. Recently, they appeared before the Japanese ambassador and declared that with 40,000 pounds, they would be able to force the Prince of Bulgaria to go to war against Turkey. They had already collected almost 20,000 and were asking the Japanese government for the rest. The Japanese ambassador flatly rejected them, declaring that his government could not agree to such a thing.

Eckardstein

15) Cipher-telegram from Baron von Eckardstein to Paul von Schwabach.

13, Grosvenor Square. W.
March 10 1904

Schwabach, Berlin

A leading Cabinet Minister told me yesterday that when the Japanese Minister inquired whether the British government was willing to support the placement of a Japanese loan in England, the Cabinet had replied that this was impossible at the present moment, as such a step could be considered a breach of neutrality.

The Cabinet Minister further stated that, based on incoming official and private reports, his government was very much afraid of a large Russian troop demonstration in Central Asia, and especially Persia. Such a demonstration could pose great dangers to Anglo-Russian relations. On the other hand, it was very gratifying to note that relations between England and France were becoming more intimate every day. The world, and especially Russia, would be astonished if certain recent agreements between France and England were one day made public. From further statements by the Minister, I believe I can gather that these agreements concern Morocco, Egypt, and the entire Mediterranean.

Eckardstein

16) Extract from a letter from Baron von Eckardstein to Paul von Schwabach:

Elysée Palace Hotel
Avenue des Champs Elysées.
Paris (8 E)

Paris, March 13, 1904

I have received the following information in confidence from two absolutely reliable sources:

During his last visit to Paris about five months ago, Count Lambsdorff succeeded in obtaining a secret addendum from the local government to the Russo-French circular note of March 1902. According to this, France undertakes to come to Russia's aid if a third power should intervene in the event of war.

This agreement, which the French are beginning to deeply regret, is still kept strictly secret. There is a strong fear here that China might intervene and that Russia might then demand that France come to its aid.

Mr. Delcassé is therefore currently trying everything to obtain Russia's consent to the inclusion of the words "except China" in this subsequent agreement. This is the reason why Mr. Delcassé, from week to week, seeks to

postpone interpellations in the Chamber concerning Russo-French agreements in the Far East.

Should it become known that such an agreement exists, even without the clause excluding China, the Cabinet would be accused of reckless conduct in the Chamber and, in all likelihood, would fall.

Eckardstein

17) Letter from Count Hayashi to Baron von Eckardstein:

4, Grosvenor Gardens
London, S. W.

8th Nov. 1904

Dear Baron,

I regret much that I have to postpone again my visit to your place on Friday, for my presence in town is imperatively required by an important business which it is not convenient for me to divulge now but of which you will know in the course of the next week,

Believe me
yours sincerely

Tadasu Hayashi

1905

18) Letter from Herr W. Betzold to Baron von Eckardstein:

103, Avenue Henri Martin,
Paris, le 30 Avril 1905

My dear Baron,

I saw Mr. Rouvier again last night and today. If you are leaving for Karlsruhe, you will be kind enough to telegraph me at Berlin, Hotel Bristol, and I will write to you explaining the situation there very explicitly, just as I did in Paris. Moreover, I will try to write a letter to you at the Marlborough Club on the train. I authorize my secretary to sign this letter, which will reach you tomorrow morning.

Yours faithfully
for Mr. Betzold

We will speak again

19) Letter from Mr. W. Betzold to Baron von Eckardstein.

Conrad Uhl's Hotel Bristol
Berlin, U. d. Linden 5. and 6.

May 3, 1905

My dear Baron.

I advise you to be cautious! The matter seems more complicated. The competent authorities here are in power, and as I hear, they are also very irritated with Delcassé. He has, of course, been working hard against us for years, and if he doesn't resign, I don't see how the matter can be resolved! --

Germany cannot demand the dismissal of a French minister. This is an internal matter in which Germany cannot interfere; and if it could, it would be impolitic. --

Rouvier, with whom I am a friend and with whom I have spoken at length in recent days, will not object to the departure of Delcassé and has himself strongly disapproved of his anti-German policy! - If Delcassé leaves, it is conceivable that the Moroccan question can be settled more quickly, and satisfactory arrangements can also be made for the other pending issues, similar to what happened with England. A certain amount of time will pass for that! Furthermore, they want to wait for the report from the Taltenbach mission first. --

The exclusively French point of view is, of course, not authoritative for these gentlemen.

I therefore advise you, as your friend, to be cautious so that the tables do not turn against you.

You are too good to be a lightning rod! On the other hand, I would be only too pleased if you could achieve a political and moral success through the negotiations. -- I will telegraph to you via Sittler if possible. The first page should be numbered 69, the second 70, and so on. -- If you write to me, it might be better to do so from Carlsruhe under the envelope of my servant, Mr. Albert Lang, and to enclose the letter addressed to me.

Count Bülow will travel to Carlsruhe tomorrow evening and arrive there Friday morning. -- I don't believe the Kaiser will arrive before 5:00 p.m. Friday afternoon. —

If you see Mr. von Schoen, please give him my regards. Thank you in advance! I will telegraph my departure.

With warm regards, yours sincerely,

W. Betzold

20) Letter from Mr. W. Betzold to Freiherm von Eckardstehi.

Hotel Bristol.
Berlin, May 3, 1905

My dear Baron!

I have already written to you by early post and come again to advise you to exercise great caution in your discussions there. I am doing this solely in your interest, so that you can carefully explore your terrain before making your proposals. —

I am under the impression that the matter is viewed here as having a deeper meaning, and that it cannot be resolved with simple, fine phrases.

Mr. Delcassé has let the right moment [1)] pass by to inform the German government of his intentions and agreements nine or twelve months ago. —

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1) As is well known, Delcassé already informed Prince Radolin on March 23, 1904, about the agreements between England and France regarding Morocco.

That was a lack of courtesy, but also very clumsy, because otherwise the matter could have been settled with Germany very quickly.

Today it seems too late! The issue has come to a head, along with other unpleasant accusations about Delcassé's policies, and today it seems to me that it is absolutely necessary to await Delcassé's resignation, as well as the reports of the Taltenbach mission, before any discussion of separate negotiations with France can take place here. -- I am convinced that if you do not consider this aspect, you will not succeed in Karlsruhe, for I believe that the Emperor is in agreement with his advisors on this issue. --

I will be pleased to hear from you how you found things there.

Rouvier certainly wants the best, but here they seem quite seriously determined to put an end to Delcassé's intrigues; of course, his dismissal must come from France and cannot be initiated from here.

I have not told anyone that you are going to Karlsruhe.

With cordial regards,

W. Betzold

21) Letter from Mr. W. Betzold to Baron von Eckardstein.

Conrad Uhl's Hotel .
Berlin, U. d. Linden 5. and 6.

4 May 1905

My dear Baron!

Thank you very much for your dispatch. — I intend to travel to Paris tomorrow at 12:55 p.m. and arrive there Saturday morning. My address for letters in Paris is 103 Avenue Henri Martin, and for dispatches, "Betzold Paris."

For dispatches, please use the Sittler Code, which you possess and which begins with page 69. That is mine too! I would be very grateful if you would telegraph the results of any discussions you may have had to me in Paris. —

You can count on my complete discretion. I have not learned anything new here today. The situation remains the same and can only improve if and after Delcassé has resigned.

The initiative for this can only come from France; for Germany cannot interfere in the internal affairs of another state. — Of course, I ask you not to mention in any discussions that this information was given to you by me, as this could cause me inconvenience.

I have the feeling, if not more, that Delcassé's colleagues will not oppose it and also want his resignation; they do not approve of this anti-German policy. —

In my opinion, it is essential for us that this man go; he has intrigued against us to such an extent that we have almost become a negligible quantity, and we are not that yet, G. L.! I hope you will return to London via Paris.

I also intend to be in London at the beginning of next week. I advise you not to telegraph dispatches openly! —

With warmest regards,

Yours very sincerely,

W. Betzold

22) Letter from Mr. W. Betzold to Baron von Eckardstein.

103 Avenue Henri Martin.

Paris, May 9,

My dear Baron.

I hope you arrived safely in London. There's not much news to report from here.

I believe that Delcassé cannot leave his post or be induced to do so until the question of French neutrality in the Far East has been satisfactorily resolved, and until his intended peace negotiations in Petersburg become clearer.

The former has so far only been suggested in the newspapers and has not yet given rise to any complaints from the Japanese or British governments.

France will strictly observe the neutrality laws. Russia will order Admiral Rozhestvensky to leave the Indo-Chinese waters, and if he were obstinate, would France declare war on Russia for this? Moreover, could France, with a few ironclads, combat the immense superiority of the Russian fleet? If the Japanese were to violate the neutrality of French waters and attack their Russian enemy there, there could be no objection under such circumstances. —

The peace negotiations in Petersburg, initiated by Delcassé, are said to have made no progress today or yesterday because the Tsar is said to be quite stubborn and, above all, wants to wait for the outcome of the expected naval battle.

I was very sorry not to have seen you before your departure; I would like to assure you again that I would be particularly pleased if your efforts in Karlsruhe were met with success. —

My warmest regards to the Baroness and warmest greetings to you.

Yours ever sincerely,

W. Betzold

23) Letter from Mr. W. Betzold to Baron von Eckardstein.

Paris, May 12 1905

My dear Baron,

Thank you for your dispatch today. Not much news from here. I saw Prime Minister Rouvier again for a long time last night, and I have the impression that we will finally come to an agreement with the gentlemen here, and that the personnel issue, of which you are familiar, will be resolved according to our wishes. — The date has not yet been set, but I believe it will be done more quickly than it seems. Incidentally, it is a matter that can only be resolved by Parliament here, and there is no shortage of suitable opportunities for this. We must, of course, stay completely away from this execution. — Any foreign interference in the internal affairs of another country is, of course, completely out of the question. — The Gravelotte celebration made a very good impression here; it was dignified for the dead and also for the living; — for the latter, even practical and hopeful! My warmest regards to the Baroness and my warmest regards to you —

Your most devoted,

W. Betzold

P.S. I'm coming to London early next week and will be very happy to see you.

D. O.

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